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LIFE OF GOETHE







TRIPPEL'S BUST OF GOETHE.

(See Vol. ii. p. 39.)

*From a Photograph of a Cast of the Original in Arolsen.*

# LIFE OF GOETHE

BY HEINRICH DÜNTZER

TRANSLATED BY

THOMAS W. LYSTER

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WITH AUTHENTIC ILLUSTRATIONS AND FACSIMILES

London

MACMILLAN AND CO.

1883



WASHINGTON'S BUST BY CHARDON.

See Vol. II. p. 217

*From a Drawing at a Time of the Original of it.*

# LIFE OF GOETHE

BY HEINRICH DÜNTZER

TRANSLATED BY

THOMAS W. LYSTER

ASSISTANT LIBRARIAN, NATIONAL LIBRARY OF IRELAND

VOL. I.—1749-1786

*Untergehend sogar ist's immer dieselbigt Sonne*

WITH AUTHENTIC ILLUSTRATIONS AND FACSIMILES

London

MACMILLAN AND CO.

1883

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## TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

THE book here placed before English readers is an accurate and copious account of the personal circumstance of Goethe's life. It is not the ideal *Life of Goethe* yet to come. The work of another generation of ardent Goethe-scholars must be done before this great book can be written. Even then Professor Düntzer's book will continue to have its value. But there can be no doubt of its great worth at present as one of the needful forerunners of the ideal Life.

Professor Düntzer is the veteran of Goethe study in Germany. Jests about the voluminousness of his works and the minuteness of his criticism are not infrequent. But I do not think that the persons who jest can really be aware of the great services of the man. All his life he has toiled faithfully to disperse the mist of hearsay, of perverse interpretation, of slanderous error, which clung round the memory of Goethe. We now live in the enjoyment of the light, and we forget too often by what diligence, by what

self-abnegation, it was brought to us. I do indeed think that most of the laughing at Professor Düntzer in England is done either by lazy people, or by those who are not aware of his services. No man has done so much to clear away difficulties. He has a keen sense of the importance of accuracy even in apparently insignificant details ; he knows that all that occurs in the world dovetails together. There is hardly any great man who has been abused with such malignity as Goethe. Lovers of his great poetry and great thoughts have felt how grievous it would be if the charges laid to his door were true. Those who have begun to ransack the sources for exact evidence, who have despaired beneath the mass of matter to be sifted, who have been at a loss for some connecting link, know what importance Professor Düntzer's details may assume, and are grateful to him.

English knowledge of Goethe's life is drawn chiefly from the book by Mr. Lewes. The little volume by Mr. Hayward is not a good source to draw one's notion of Goethe from. I had rather be without a notion of Goethe than so provide myself. Mr. Lewes's book is generous, makes allowances, and does not judge the great Poet with tea-table criticism. If we cannot help finding it unsatisfactory nowadays, let us not forget that we owe that largely to Mr. Lewes himself : he has

educated us into disparagement. But the fact remains that the book is not satisfactory. Mr. Lewes's main work on it was done a long time ago, when comparatively few of Goethe's letters were printed. And the revision of 1875 mentioned in the preface was not a thorough, adequate revision. I have looked into this, and know that it is so. No one can fail to observe, moreover, that the book is not only a Life of Goethe, but a compendium of small essays of not much value, and debates with the imaginary stiff-necked reader who will not judge Goethe as Mr. Lewes desires, and discussion of points lately settled beyond dispute, such as the date of *Werther*, and the part of Marianne von Willemer in the *Westöstlicher Divan*. Were these superfluities omitted, but a small book of narrative, of actual *communication*, would remain. And in that small book much that is inaccurate will be noted.

Professor Düntzer may well be content to leave his book to the verdict of the many earnest students of Goethe, who desire precision and fulness of detail, who want a book to refer to and find in. He has written for those who mean to take Goethe gravely, and in their judgment he will find his reward. And perhaps many not disposed to take Goethe gravely hitherto, will be disposed to do so when they read how well he lived the commonplace daily life of a man, how good

he was to his friends, how diligent in a round of tiresome duties, how compassionate to the suffering and the poor, how implacable towards the baffling foes within, how free from bitterness towards the foes without. The atmosphere of Goethe's magnanimity must in the end conquer active hostility, the record of his daily life is needed to attract the attention of the indifferent.

In translating this Book I have endeavoured to transmute and fuse the German sentences into English. If I have failed in places, I must ask the indulgence which I should now give to another, knowing as I do the great difficulty of resisting the influence of the foreign style. Sometimes having examined the sources, I have added little touches that belong to the subject, and that seem to me to give interest and colour. I have, of course, been scrupulous not to make any statement which does not agree with the Author's views. Most of my information is indeed drawn from his very useful books. With his aid I have detected and set right several small errors of detail, and I owe him sincere thanks for the patience and courtesy with which he replied to my not infrequently mistaken objections. The headings of chapters, and of sections in some chapters are my work. The footnotes and references were begun for my own benefit, and it then occurred

to me that they would increase the value of the book in England, as we have hitherto not possessed any work on Goethe's life containing frequent reference to his Letters. Indeed, I hope that this translation is the beginning of some exact Goethe-scholarship among us.

It must also be mentioned that I have frequently translated direct from the letters of Goethe instead of translating from Professor Düntzer's paraphrase, and have thus, I think, added to the clearness of the narrative. As this is the sole book of minute reference to Goethe's life accessible to English readers, I have thought it my duty sometimes to change allusions into direct statements; and I have continually laboured to introduce precise mention of date and place.

I owe thanks to the Reverend Oscar Krahmer of Dublin for explanation of the meaning of some difficult words; to Professor Mahaffy for clearing up some puzzles, and for acute criticism of some proof-sheets with their Germanisms; and to Professor Dowden for reading nearly all the proofs, for kindly assistance on very many occasions, and for the support of unflagging sympathy.

spiritual presence of the great dead is plainly felt ; nor is love's blameless partiality blind to those weaknesses and faults, inseparable from all human greatness—as small mishaps chequer every victory. There is indeed no man who must not with reverence shrink from the task of depicting such a mighty figure as the creator of *Faust*, had not a kindly destiny willed that, beside his own set confessions and the many radiations of his spirit in Art,—so diverse, so full of significance—there is preserved to us a vast number of original communications—both epistolary and of other kinds—written by the poet and by those who knew him. With the aid of these we can follow him almost step by step in the important crises—can obtain exact insight into the secret recesses of his life.

But the delver of this unvalued treasure must use the most diligent care. Often, indeed, secure interpretation and full illumination is possible only to one who already possesses fresh and accurate knowledge of the main course of Goethe's life and dealings with men.

Goethe has himself given to the world a minute account of his first six and twenty years. All rivalry of this exquisite book is vain. Yet here is really but an apparent difficulty for the biographer. For there is no question of rivalry. The old man's beautiful and animated story of his youth is composed of *Dichtung*



and *Wahrheit* — of *Poetry* and *Truth* marvellously woven. The general delineation corresponds with the actual fact. But many of the particular details have been moved from their places for the sake of artistic grouping, and again, details for the completion of episodes and scenes have been supplied by imagination when memory and other sources failed. Accordingly, while Goethe's biographer will, from time to time, refer his readers to the presentation of things in *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, because this presentation is universally known, and after it other men's work is bathos, it should be understood—without prejudice to the beautiful ideal vision of the past that Goethe saw from the serene heights of his wise old age—that the main duty of the narrator of the poet's early manhood is to help exact truth to her rights, and that chiefly by skilful use of the disclosures of recent years. In Goethe's time it was not possible to arrange facts in their correct order, or to throw upon them the light now known to be the true one.

We have hitherto lacked a Life of Goethe which, carefully sifting the vast masses of material, shall indicate simply and clearly the nodal centres of his development as a man and a poet; indicate the relations and circumstances that conditioned development; be perspicuous, and yet omit nothing of importance;

and, moreover, call attention to the point of union whence all the diverging lines of aspiration and of action proceed ; to the traits of character everywhere manifest, the noble magnanimity, the deep sense of duty, the steadfast faith in the care of a Higher Power, the restless unwearied activity, and the inward impulsion towards a complete culture. Especially has the period terminated by the final breach with Charlotte von Stein (1749-1789) waited for adequate treatment. The after-time is easier to deal with. After following Goethe so far, the reader possesses knowledge enough of that wonderful nature, fulfilling its being, as it were, of necessity, to read a general sketch of the rest of his Life with profit. Still it is hardly needful to repeat the warning, that all the several threads—the warp in the woof of this marvellous existence—and not least the thread of Domestic Life, must be followed up with extreme care.

In the book here laid before the reader Goethe's literary works are noticed as golden fruit that grew and ripened on the profuse and splendid tree, his life, but there is no attempt to fix their artistic value, or measure their spiritual contents by analysis. As for his scientific labours, only their importance as part of Goethe's activity and culture, and their place in the growth of science can be indicated.



The illustrations present persons and places as they actually were ; and they can be relied on. This merit above all others I have sought to make a characteristic of my account of Goethe's life ; I renounce all colour which does not belong to the thing portrayed.



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## ERRATA.

### VOL. I.

Page	6,	line	8,	<i>for</i>	July 20,	.	.	<i>read</i>	August 20.
„	98,	„	11,	„	an abscess,	.	„	a	tumour.
„	126,	„	8,	„	Günderobe,	.	„	Günderode.	
„	286,	„	20,	„	marriage,	.	„	betrothal.	
„	297,	„	3,	„	June 26,	.	„	July 28.	
„	327,	„	17,	„	end of February,	„	beginning of February.		
„	384,	„	15,	„	Lodge of St. John,	„	Midsummer Lodge of 1780.		

The student must also consult the Appendix to Vol. I., and, before reading, he should make pencil marks of reference on the pages in which, according to the Appendix, alterations are necessary.





BOOK I.

BOYHOOD UNDER HIS FATHER'S ROOF

1749—1765



# THE LIFE OF GOETHE

## CHAPTER I.

FROM WOLFGANG'S BIRTH TO THE DEATH OF HIS  
GRANDMOTHER.

1749-1754.

IN the old "free elective and commercial City of the Empire," Frankfurt-am-Main, was born, on the 28th of August 1749, at the stroke of noon, the boy whose name was to be her chief glory. The sun in the sign of the Virgin at its highest diurnal altitude, Jupiter and Venus dominant, was a favourable conjunction which the great poet notes in his autobiography—we think of Herder, who, born into a straitened life, saw destiny in being born at midnight.

It was a good time and place to be born. Just before the end of the first half of the century of the Illumination (*Aufklärung*); in the morning dawn of German poetry—for in 1749 the first five cantos of the *Messias* came out, and Lessing and Wieland, who, at the same time as Klopstock, and with like strivings, were the beginners of a new time in the literature of our Fatherland, were then in the first stage of their development. And what German city offered a more rich and varied life, more freedom for growth, a more agitated intellectual air, a more lively concourse of distinguished

strangers, than this Imperial City, lying so close to the noblest German river on its tributary Main? Still, as Goethe sadly notes,<sup>1</sup> she, like most of her sisters, was "decaying in and with her privileges." Thorough depravity prevailed not among the nobility alone; the burgher city-councillors too were tainted with the greed for power, the greed for gold, and the evil passions of such parentage; even to the lower ranks the corrupted manners were now spreading. How well for our poet that his father's house was islanded safe from the infection, an abode of noble discipline, of austere dignity.

Goethe's father was the son of Friedrich Georg Goethe, a journeyman tailor, who, leaving Artern on the Unstrut, a Thuringian river, finally rested from his many wanderings in Frankfurt, and there, in his thirtieth year (1687), took to wife Anna Elizabeth Lutz, herself a tailor's daughter. She died in 1700, and after five years of single life, Friedrich Georg wedded the widow Cornelia Schelhorn, owner of the inn *Zum Weidenhof*, and still comely in her seven and thirtieth year. One who knew this grandfather of the poet describes him as courteous, of thorough musical attainment, but off his head with pride. The third and last child of this marriage, Johann Kaspar Goethe, the father of the poet, was born July 27, 1710. He went for his education in letters to the grammar-school (*Pädagogium*) of Coburg. During this absence his father and elder brother died. At Leipzig and Giessen he studied law with diligence; then, according to the custom of the time, was occupied in the *Reichskammergericht* at Wetzlar; finally, at Giessen, won his Doctor of Laws with a masterly dissertation. Urged by a passion for knowledge, he then journeyed to Italy; bringing with him many works of art, rich in store of facts and memories, he then travelled probably through France and Holland, and came to his own city. There,

<sup>1</sup> Goethe's *Tagebuch*, Dec. 7, 1777.—TR.

resolved to spend the rest of his life in her service, he tried for an inferior civic office; he would take it without salary, if the customary balloting might in his election be dispensed with—a distinction which he thought fairly due to his well-known qualifications. But the Council would not consent; there being, they said, no sufficient reason for departure from custom. So hurt was the Doctor of Laws by this, that he vowed never to accept any civic post. By Kaiser Karl VII., of unlucky memory, he was raised to the dignity of actual (*wirklich*) imperial councillor; and this cut off all possibility of entering the service of his mother-town, since he now was as high in rank as its highest office-bearers.

Not till universal peace<sup>1</sup> seemed at hand did Johann Kaspar begin to look about him in earnest for a wife worthy of him. She must be one bright with the perfect bloom of health, fit to bring forth vigorous sons and daughters; and she must belong to an old, not wealthy, *burgher* family of high dignity. Now Johann Wolfgang Textor, first in point of seniority among the sheriffs and imperial councillors, had lately—August 10, 1747—been raised to the prime dignity of the city—the Chief Magistracy. He was grandson of the famous jurist—also Johann Wolfgang Textor—who had, in 1690, been summoned to Frankfurt as First Syndic; he was son of Christoph Heinrich Textor, Advocate and Councillor to the Elector Palatine. Since the chief magistrate was of burgher descent, and not very rich, Johann Kaspar Goethe, now almost eight and thirty, sought in marriage his eldest daughter, Katharina Elizabeth Textor, just seventeen on the 19th of February 1748.

To the young girl it was part of the order of things; she did not hesitate even at thought of going with this grave, dignified, well-to-do husband to the house of his mother,

<sup>1</sup> From the War of the Austrian Succession.—Tr.

Cornelia Goethe, who still, at eighty, bore the household cares. The honoured widow had fifteen years before bought for herself and her descendants a house on the *Hirschgraben*, and an adjoining building with great cellars, in which there was plenty of room for the good wine left from former inn-keeping. She must have been rich, for since 1744 she had paid 200 florins annual assessment.

So on July 20, 1748, Wolfgang's father and mother were married. Only two months before his son's birth Johann Kaspar was enrolled as burgess. But though he became the Frankfurt representative of one of the countless German princes of the time, he did not enter his name on the list of advocates : he wished, in retirement, free from business, to live for self-culture and for his family.

Goethe's father was a man of solid learning, of sober judgment ; adhering firm to his will ; stern in carrying out that will ; and passionate in outbreak of wrath if he thought himself wronged. But with all his sternness he had a tender, simple, pure heart, and his most earnest desire was a happy home, and the crown of children to honour his name. Honest craftsmen had gone before him ; his grandfather, Hans Christian Goethe, had been a shoeing smith in Artern ; one of the smith's sons had followed the same trade ; and one of his grandsons, a journeyman shoemaker, had since 1745 been striving in vain for admission to the citizenship of Frankfurt, and for the right to practise there as master-shoemaker. With such prosaic records of descent Councillor Goethe longed for a son—always thought of as a lawyer—of intellectual greatness to give the one thing lacking—distinction—to the already wealthy family. And what a splendid reality was to crown his hope, differing much indeed from what he looked for ; nothing could be less his thought than that he should give to Germany—to the world—a poet, with genius divinely lighting up all things, of undying fame.



FIG. 1. Goethe's Father and Mother, from portraits taken at the same period ; the former after the Frankfurt *Gedenkblätter an Goethe* ; the latter from a photograph of a picture, a photograph given by A. Nicolovius to Salomon Hirzel.



Though the young mother—hardly more than a child—brought up to obedient ways, had accepted her upright, respectable husband without loving him, it was with firm reliance for her welfare on his unwavering affection and the Divine care. Nature had given her beautiful gifts,—a heart, noble, tender, ardent; perception, vivid, interested; healthy naturalness in feeling and act; a joyous trust in God. And none of these good gifts had been spoiled or wasted in a happy girlhood spent under the loving care of a young mother, of whom she was the firstborn, at only twenty, by a husband eighteen years older. On the contrary, the eager animated goings-on in the life of her native city—very much stirred just at that time—would quicken and widen emotions and sympathies, would develop character. As to things learned in school and from masters indeed, her education was limited; music and singing alone she had brought to considerable proficiency. When between ten and eleven, an ecstatic reverence for Kaiser Karl VII.—handsome and good and unlucky—possessed the little maid; twice the emperor had to make a considerable stay in Frankfurt when his capital München was in the hands of the enemy; even more than reverence, a secret love for him grew in the childish soul, such close ties bound him with her native city, he was crowned by disaster with such a wondrous halo. She used to think he noticed her, especially at a time when he often came through the *Friedbergergasse*, where the Textors lived in a castellated house, and used to send greetings and glances to their windows. Never to be forgotten were the wild horns pealing as he passed her home, leaving Frankfurt for the last time. And when she learnt the death of her beloved emperor,—he died January 20th 1745—the keenest sorrow pierced her soul. Two hours every day till four weeks were spent, the solemn bells tolled remembrance of the dead, and their mournful noise shook her with terrible throbbings.



But the pain of the young soul thus living in fantasy was soon assuaged by warm influences from an external world full of sunny brightness, for time brought good things to her house. In her seventeenth year came the quite unexpected elevation of her father to the Chief Magistracy, the highest dignity of the city. With her mother and a sister Johanna Maria three years younger than herself for companions, her young life went joyously by ; to her father, a rather eccentric man, grave and contemplative, always very busy, there was no bond of sym-



FIG. 2. Goethe's Father and Mother, from silhouettes taken at the same period, the fidelity of which was guaranteed by Goethe.

pathy. And then the delicately blooming, brown-haired maiden of eighteen, looking out on the world so brightly from her brown eyes, left her father's cheerful house, especially cheerful for its large well-cared garden ; and entered the rather gloomy dwelling of her husband, without a garden, only from the upper windows overlooking the gardens of neighbours.

During the early part of the young married life thus begun, the household was managed by the aged mother-in-law, an earnest insister on cleanliness and order. She was an extremely amiable, kindhearted woman ; and the happiness in store for her son in his marriage with the young bright daughter of the

Chief Magistrate was to her unalloyed joy. And though the middle-aged husband, passionately fond of teaching, and desiring his wife to be proficient not only in music and singing but in writing, gave the young thing regular lessons, and the hours were very tedious, she still felt in all this more deeply than ever the honest truthfulness of his great love.

But what a star dawned for Elizabeth when the son of her youth was born. Named Johann Wolfgang after a greatgrandfather of honoured memory; how much greater was this first sapling of the united houses of Textor and Goethe to make the name. Kind Nature gave the boy her best gifts. By his mother came above all that feeling heart, without which, as after many years he himself said to Lavater,<sup>1</sup> no man is supremely great in the world of practice or in creative art, and the place of which cannot be filled by merely intellectual power. Beaming through his clear brown mother's eyes his spirit like hers was noble, tender, warm, passionate; though like hers it healed rapidly from the deepest wounds. By his young mother, too, came his active imagination, vivid perception, healthy naturalness, and that joyous trust in God which speaks in the noble words to Lavater, "God, to whom I have ever been true, has blessed me abundantly in secret."<sup>2</sup> Like his mother, the boy apprehended easily and quickly; like her too in capacity for silent enjoyment, he was yet insatiable in hunger for ever new impressions. His genius called unceasingly for fresh experience to assimilate and to grow by; and as it consumed rapidly, soon exhausted the familiar surroundings; then a feeling of limitation made it yearn for the enlargement and invigoration of change. And yet his thoroughly sensuous intelligence, always desiring actual vision and the bodily presence of things, clung close to the familiar, in so far that deep

<sup>1</sup> Goethe to Lavater, April 9, 1781.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> Goethe to Lavater, October 8, 1779.—TR.

down in his heart lived all experiences and feelings; only the separate and peculiar images of things could not but blur and fade fast from that busily mirroring soul: to prevent their total disappearance their colours must be refreshed.

But Wolfgang had part in the characteristics of his father also, from whom came his serious fixedness of will and firm persistence in doing what seemed to him right to be done; his serene consciousness of worth, his keen sense of duty. In Wolfgang, however, beside all these, were deep insight and fiery vehemence, a restless instinctive pressing ever toward higher culture, a consciousness that he was able to toil terribly—"Gefühl der Kraft zu kühnem Fleiss," as it runs in Faust—and the belief that he was born for greatness.

The young mother poured out all her most fervent love on the beautiful child, sadly weak at first from a very painful birth, but soon getting on capitally, to the great joy of his parents, who felt in him a bond of nearer union. A year and three months later the family wealth was increased by the birth of a little daughter, named Cornelia, after Grandmother Goethe. This little sister of Wolfgang had fine gifts, deep seriousness, penetrating intellect, a loving susceptible soul, and between brother and sister grew a tender union, which, in the years spent together under the strict schoolmastership of their father, was drawn closer and closer. The children often went to the house of their grandparents Textor, where the fine garden was a real blessing to them, or to the new home of their mother's younger sister, Johanna Maria, married since the end of 1751 to the druggist Melber. At no other houses were they familiar visitors. With the half-brother of their father, Alderman Hermann Jakob Goethe, there was no very animated intercourse: still he was godfather at the christening of Wolfgang's young brother, November 27, 1752. In the same year the master-shoemakers were excited almost to in-

surrection at thought of the admission to their rank of the already-mentioned journeyman, Christof Justus Goethe ; the refractory masters were put under arrest, and Christof Justus was at last successful in January 1753.

For that younger brother little Wolfgang cared far less than for his sister. With her he used to play up and down through the house, now in the wide spaces of the great entrance-hall, now in the apartment curiously latticed from street and hall, called *Geräms*, and now in grandmother's sitting-room overlooking the courtyard.

This kind grandmother, now growing daily weaker, prepared a great delight for the boy in a puppet-show of David and Goliath, which she caused to be exhibited to the children on Christmas Eve, 1753. It was like a blessing at farewell from the good old woman, now in her eighty-sixth year. Some three months later she died suddenly when going to bed. This death could, of course, make but slight impression on the child, not yet five years old ; still it was of great importance in shaping the home-life of the future.

Only the prospect of rebuilding had enabled Rath Goethe to put up with the gloom, the odd corners, the irregularity of his house ; there was not even room enough in it, the companion house being let to a law-student named Clauer, son of a former Keeper of the Town Archives. The children had generally been kept in the family sitting-rooms, during summer weather they were allowed to stay in the Garden-Room on the second story, above the courtyard. It was a great delight to Wolfgang to look from this room across the town gardens and walls into the distance of the level country spreading down the Main towards Höchst, to watch from these western windows the ever new glory of the sunsets ; yet the delight was mixed with loneliness and yearning at sight of the merry play, the free coming and going of children, or the laughing, talking

groups of older people in the gardens from which he was shut out. However, his father had a vineyard near the *Friedbergerthor*, to which he sometimes permitted his son to accompany him ; there, at about his sixth year, the boy was present at the joyous ingathering of the grapes. The design of the rebuilding was now carefully thought over, and all distant preparations for it were made, but there could be no real beginning until after the birth of a child expected in September.

Wolfgang's father, who observed his easy grasp of knowledge with great joy, put him early in harness, and tried even to make play-hours bring fresh store of knowledge. When, by the father's urgency and the boy's natural bent, the difficulties of learning to read were conquered, lesson books in rhyme were introduced ; a geography, the rhymes in which, barbarous, and therefore amusing, were most easily fixed in mind, and Cellarius's *Latinitatis Liber memorialis*. On these and other exercises of memory there was strict insistence. Also with especial pleasure the father related to the eager, precocious boy, from the history of his mother-city, much which was connected with existing buildings, customs, and names. But Wolfgang listened with far greater tension of interest and excitement to the stories of his mother, who, with her kindly sympathy and vivid imagination, quite carried him away. How she did rejoice when his wide open eyes glowed with earnest sympathy, when his breast throbbed to the great heart-beats, and his parted lips were eloquent with unspoken emotion and foreboding. Thus his mother was the first educator of the inventive, plastic poet-power which dwelt within him. And the popular chap-books too, on unsized paper, which he could get for a few kreutzers at the bookstalls near the cathedral, had even at that early time a fructifying effect on his busy imagination.

There was in the Frankfurt blood a great delight in the



old traditional festivities which ushered in the half-yearly fairs, and in the picturesque various activity of the fairs themselves. Even grave Councillor Goethe, to whom from his youth these had been familiar splendours, could not restrain the children from a full enjoyment of them, and this especially because Grandfather Textor, as Chief Magistrate, had always to take a distinguished part in them. Goethe, only a few years before his death, recalled with delight how he and his sister gave money, and bread-and-butter, and coloured eggs, to the masked Three Kings at the Star-singing, to the Shrove Tuesday singers, and to those who announced the coming of the swallows ; and he thought, too, of the autumnal harvest festival, which, at a later time, was merely a religious ceremony. Of delightful festivals without the town, in which the children took part from a very early age, he names the Shepherd Festival at the *Grindbrunnen*, and the so-called Cow-dance on Pentecost Tuesday at the *Pfingstweide*, which last was forbidden in 1758. So the year in its course brought the children many a merrymaking within or without the old Imperial City.

## CHAPTER II.

FROM THE REBUILDING OF THE GOETHE'S HOUSE TO THE  
OUTBREAK OF THE SEVEN YEARS' WAR.

1755, 1756.

ON the 6th of March 1755, six months after the birth of his second daughter, Rath Goethe handed in to the Town Council a plan of his proposed rebuilding ; a week later he gave notice that, in order to build according to this plan, he would throw down and build afresh that companion house to the north which has been mentioned before. There was some hesitation about permitting this portion of the building, which would thus be completely new, to have, like the old main-house, a projecting second story, so the final decision of the Council was not made known till the 25th of April. Immediately the neighbour house was thrown down, and the foundation of the new building laid in the old cellar. The corner-stone was placed by little Wolfgang, clad as a mason, a trowel in his hand, the master stone-mason by his side directing. Props were put against the main house, the gable wall on the ground floor was to be renewed, part of the old roof was taken off. The building gave all kinds of fun to the children. But since, in spite of all defensive erections, the rain would come through the breach in the roof until even the beds were drenched, it was necessary to send the children to live elsewhere, with their

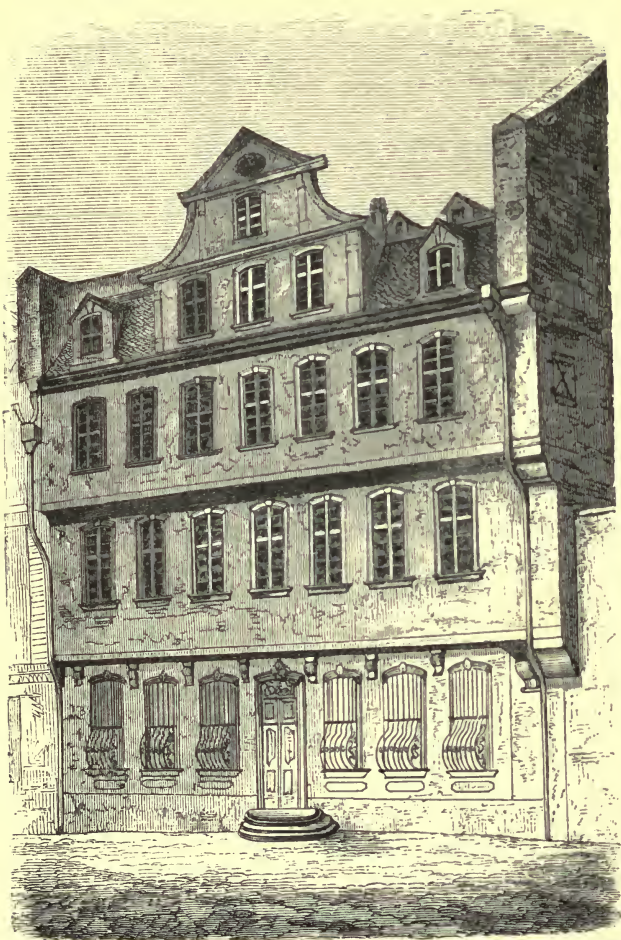


FIG. 3. The House in which Goethe was born.



grandparents, or with cheery Aunt Johanna, and for lessons they must go to school. This absence from home meant, especially to the boy, greater freedom, and he used it to make a wider survey of the city.

In accordance with the modern taste the house was to be made comely without as within. In place of small round windows came larger, with clear glass panes, then a special adornment. The front wall was quite changed, square red sandstone slabs were used for sills, etc., of the hall door, and of the six windows on the ground floor; on the windows of the upper story these slabs were imitated by painting the plaster. And the windows of this first row were protected with the cage-lattices at that time usual, curving elegantly outwards. At the top of the hall door

—the hall door was now placed midway along the front of the house —was a small window with a projecting lattice adorned by cunning smith-work; beside flowers and parrots there was a crown, and beneath it the initials of the master of the house. Above this, on the keystone, was the coat of arms of the Imperial Councillor, which he also wore as a seal; the upper half, like that of the Textor family, had

a man visible to the knee, ready for combat, brandishing a drawn sword in his right hand, and with neck-scarf flying; below was a beam slanting from right to left downwards; set on this beam were three lyres lying obliquely lengthwise one after another. This lower part of the coat of arms perhaps connects with that Friedrich Georg Goethe, who cared for dignified appearances, and who was such a lover of music.



FIG. 4. Coat of Arms on the Goethes' House.

Wolfgang, when a Leipzig student, thought so little of the three lyres, that instead of them he introduced commonplace shields in a coat of arms which was attached to a landscape of his own etching, dedicated to his father.

At present his father was in the best spirits, all had gone so well. To Wolfgang was given, all for himself, a comfortable, large room, looking out on the street on the third story next the roof; yet the opposite houses were so high that the sun rose late to the child. Now earnest study was to make up for delay and interrupted lessons. To the *Young Latin Scholar* of Cellarius was added a book by John Amos Comenius, *Orbis Sensualium Pictus*, or *The Visible World*, the picture-book of the time with the German and Latin names for everything of land, or sea, or air; and perhaps at this time were undertaken a few of the two hundred *Useful, Amusing, and Remarkable Narratives and Discourses from the Most Celebrated Greek and Latin Authors* to be found in Heidegger's *Acerra Philologica*. "Merian's *Folio Bible* with pictures, and Gottfried's *Historical Chronicle* with Merian's copperplates," also came at this time into the hands of the eager boy.

And the work of arranging the household treasures, which was purposely protracted, engaged the attention of the children in many ways. First, their father's large collection of books was divided between his study on the second story and a room on the third story; then the pictures, in dark frames striped with gold, were hung in a precise order in the room with three windows occupying the middle place on the second story; the views from Rome, the geographical sheets, etc., found a place on the walls of corridors and passages; art objects of many kinds—chief among which were those from Venice, the splendid specimens of glass-work, the model of a gondola, the bronzes, and the weapons—were, with almost painful carefulness, placed on the shelves intended for them.

The ingathering of the grapes was hardly over when the world was horror-stricken by tidings of the mighty earthquake, during which, on the 1st of November 1755, a great part of Lisbon was swallowed, and a vast tract of land and sea rocked to and fro. All the pulpits zealously improved the terrible occasion into a judgment of God on a world lying in wickedness. Each tale of the desolation of Lisbon was followed by another more terrible, and the apprehension plain in all around affected the intelligent boy; but it was soon driven away by his healthy tone of feeling, and by the conception of a benevolent Deity, deep implanted within, and strengthened by his mother's care. By Bettina it is told of him, that after hearing a sermon about the earthquake, he replied to a question from his father:—"God knows well that by ill destiny no injury can come to the immortal soul;" evidently a reference to the gloomy notion that the souls which had passed away in their sins were lost for ever. Grandmother and mother had accustomed the children, while still very young, to regular prayers. In an exercise written out and translated by Wolfgang in January 1757, it is told how the children, when their hair was brushed, kneeling with folded hands, said their morning prayer. They were taught to go to church regularly, to know the Lutheran Catechism. But ecclesiastical conceptions did not cleave to Goethe's soul; to him they were merely acquired formulas, of which he made such use as one makes of any traditional theories; within him lived the idea of an all-gracious and all-wise Creator and Preserver of the world, to whom reverence must draw nigh by a way purer and more spiritual than any words; an indication is the thank-offering, charmingly described by Goethe himself, offered as the first morning sunshine fell across his chamber.

The first Christmas in the new house was near when the youngest little daughter, only fifteen months old, died (1755).

However the stricken parents might sorrow, the children's Christmas should not lack its brightness; the puppet-show, first given by their grandmother, and produced under the direction of their mother two years before, was repeated now in a way suitable to their more advanced age, in a company of others as old as themselves. The audience sat in Wolfgang's room; the stage filled the doorway of the adjoining room. This representation interested the boy so much, that he did not rest until he had penetrated the mystery. He soon found where the little figures of the puppet-show were kept, and then persuaded his mother to give them over to him, with the book of words and the theatre. In the puppet-show story of *Wilhelm Meister's Lehrjahre*, most of the details, even as to the composition of scenes and acts, are a free transfer from Goethe's own boy-life.

These experiences of a childish theatre, which found more favour with his mother than with his father, had their value in training his dramatic faculty. But parallel to them, a regular schooling ran its accustomed course; for his father insisted on the fastest possible acquisition of the parts of education dependent on memory alone, and tried constantly to add to Wolfgang's knowledge even in his play-hours. An earnest desire to know all about the various lands of the earth and their peoples was encouraged in every way. He had already some acquaintance with the more modern German poets, which stood calf-bound on his father's shelves,—Fleming, Besser, Canitz, Drollinger, Haller, Hagedorn, Gellert, Creutz; in them he learnt to read—he can hardly be said to have read them—such is his own account. On the same shelves he found Neukirch's rhymed translation of *Télémaque*,—even in such a disguise the tale did the child good,—and Kopp's translation of his father's favourite poet, Tasso. The first seven books of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, in a translation pub-

lished in Nürnberg in 1698, with engravings by Sandrart, fell into his hands. Besides the popular chap-books on unsized paper, among which without doubt occurred that of *Faust*, he devoured *Robinson Crusoe* and Schnabel's *Insel Felsenburg*. Certainly now-a-days nobody would let the last-named into a child's hands ; but the people of that time did not as we do fear injury to a young mind in the simple naming of natural things. Wolfgang also came to know the travels of the great circumnavigator and admiral, Lord Anson, a translation of which into German had been published in 1749. Thus from many sources the boy drew rich nourishment ; he was training early to that restless activity which was to possess him to the end.

## CHAPTER III.

### THE BEGINNING OF THE SEVEN YEARS' WAR.

1757, 1758.

VERY soon the peaceful quiet, in which seven happy years of Wolfgang's life had passed, should give place to the clangour of a war not to cease until seven more years were gone, a war sundering native city, and even family, into two almost hostile camps. Grandfather Textor, who had supported the canopy over the Emperor and received from the Empress a golden chain, stood with the larger part of the council on the Imperial side; Councillor Goethe and the burghers were for Prussia. Alas! Vienna influence had gained over the governing body in Frankfurt; while its people desired the neutrality, which was in accordance with Frederick's wishes, and by which the town would be spared not only the contribution of soldiers to the Imperial cause, but the march through of French reinforcements. Each man in high office looked for an ample share of favours from the Emperor,—from the “rebellious” King of Prussia what could be hoped! On the outbreak of the war, the Council immediately forbade the publication and distribution of political pamphlets; and required that “every one should attend to his business and calling, withholding himself from discussion and pronouncing opinions.” This was meant to bridle in the citizens with their Prussian leanings, but it only



made the general mood more bitter, without restraining it from expression. Frankfurt booksellers, despite the Council, published praises of the heroic Prussian King whom they honoured. Wolfgang too was full of this enthusiasm, and he could ill bear the angry censure of Frederick, which he heard every Sunday at dinner in his grandfather's house; heard not only from his grandfather but from his grandfather's new son-in-law, Pastor Starck.<sup>1</sup> To hear these hostile things said, and to be compelled to sit without answering was hard, nearly all the pleasure was gone from the Sundays which had hitherto been so enjoyable; but he relieved his feelings by speaking to his father praises of Frederick more ardent than ever. With great delight he copied out the war-songs of the day, and he enjoyed still more the satirical rhymes about the Emperor, which, dull as they were, made a vivid impression on him. That a whole league of nations arose against Frederick, made the sympathy of the enthusiastic boy the more irresistible, and when there was news of victory, his rapture rose the higher to think of the odds overcome. Alas! Kollin followed close on Prague.<sup>2</sup>

Beside his father's zealous instruction Wolfgang began to have some schooling away from home with other children. At a later time he, perhaps by his father's desire, selected for preservation a number of exercises then written which he labelled *Jugendarbeiten* (*Labores juveniles*). Of these the earliest, belonging to January 1757, are short themes, composed in German, then translated into Latin. These "*exercitia privata*," which are quite childish in their style and have several positive mistakes, must be altogether Wolfgang's own. To the same January belongs the first of three conversations

<sup>1</sup> Textor's third daughter had, November 2, 1756, married Pastor Starck, nominated with her father's aid to the parishes Niederrad and Sachsenhausen, soon after appointed Sunday preacher at St. Katharine's.—DÜNTZER.

<sup>2</sup> Prague on May 6, Kollin on June 18, 1757.—TR.

written in German and then turned into Latin. These also can hardly have originated with the father, they seem too light and humorous for the stern serious man, they correspond well to the character of the lively boy. The first in order, which is probably the earliest, is the happy turning of a real incident. Wolfgang, when his father went to the cellar for wine, had wished to go too ; he wanted to see once more the foundation-stone laid two years ago. His father prescribed to him as a theme the development of a conversation about this, and he was then to make Latin of it ; the final fair copy has come down to us. Wolfgang was delighted with the opportunity of exhibiting his knowledge. Thus he pressed into service Horace's fable of the Town and Country Mouse, the story of which he had read in the rhymes of Drollinger ; he also brought in Damasippus, the dealer in antiques in Horace ; we cannot tell where Wolfgang got this bit of lore. He probably overheard somewhere the joke of calling very good wine "theological wine" founded on the word-play "*vinum consulare*," "*vinum consistoriale*." Great skill in the turnings and bright playfulness are displayed in this dialogue. The second and third cannot be of much later date. In one the father will not hear of his son's making animals of wax ; the small artist may praise to the skies the work of his hands ; the father can see nothing but childish nonsense, it is wasting good wax ; the figures prove one thing at any rate, that their maker does not know beauty from ugliness. When the son expresses a wish to be taught, the reply is that his eyes must grow a little older first. In the third dialogue, Wolfgang and Maximilian enter ; it is doubtful who is meant by the latter name. There was a Friedrich Maximilian, son of the Sheriff and Bürgermeister Moors, who lived near the Goethes, but if it were this boy, a younger brother of his, born on the same day with Wolfgang, would hardly have been left out. Wolfgang had wished to



come some time before the Latin lesson which they both received at Maximilian's home, but alas ! he has been delayed in laying the dinner-table and in other preparations for a visit. Maximilian thinks it strange that his friend is not invited to this entertainment by his parents, but, as a dutiful son, Wolfgang refuses to consider the matter closely. Maximilian will hear nothing of all the devices proposed by Wolfgang for passing the time before the lesson-hour. He cannot bring himself to peruse the *Praxis declinationum et conjugationum* of Speccius nor the *Orbis pictus* of Comenius ; even an edition of the last-

Auf. Schrift  
 Mein  
 Johannes Wolfgang Goethe  
 ist in der 20. Pflanzung von dem  
 Vater und Herr v. Stollberg  
 am 29. März 1754  
 4. Platz erhalten.

FACSIMILE 1. From H. Weismann's *Aus Goethes Knabenzeit* (see p. 26).

named in *four* languages with the German, Latin, Italian, and French names of things, is without charm to him. He proposes fencing or wrestling ; Wolfgang, half from childish caprice, half from fear of the sudden arrival of the master, rejects his proposals, and here the conversation ceases. What pleasant peeps into that home-life ! It may be noted that in his German composition the boy has in mind the introduction of certain Latin idioms. In our bundle of manuscript we see too that his father often dictated suitable stories of the time for translation into Latin ; but indeed Wolfgang of his own accord did exercises of all kinds. Further, we find a number of so-called

"*Stechschriften*," from the 29th March 1757 to March 1758, in which Wolfgang competed with a pretty large number—sometimes twenty-four—of his own age, about twice a month, for a prize in handwriting, under the guidance of the regular teacher of languages—probably of the "German school, writing, and arithmetic master," Schirmer, who was very popular in Frankfurt. The judgment of the handwriting, falling to each of the parents in turn, came one time to Sheriff and Bürgermeister von Olenschlager. Wolfgang was first only once, but generally his copy was among the best. We give here the subscription to one, where he has written his name in full. From the Schirmer above mentioned he probably had lessons in German and arithmetic. Goethe himself says that in rhetorical things, *Chrien* and the like, he was best, though he often had to stand down for mistakes in grammar.

By this time the grim shadow of the war had fallen across the Imperial City. Frankfurt was summoned to produce its contingent of seven district companies. The little army encamped on the 6th June on the great *Fischerfeld* before the *Allerheiligenthor* ("Gate of All Saints"); it remained here four weeks; thence it marched through Frankfurt and Sachsenhausen to the army of the Empire, and did not return till peace had been made. Beside this military spectacle Wolfgang several times saw the march through to which French battalions, as auxiliaries of the Emperor, were entitled. There was great joy among all the friends of Prussia in the short days of November (1757), when at Rossbach the French and Imperial troops were disgracefully beaten. A month later the splendid victory of the Prussians at Leuthen (Dec. 5th, 1757), was followed by the capitulation of Breslau.

Rath Goethe's life was very happy just then. In the previous March had been born a little daughter whose beauty and sweetness won Wolfgang completely. The two elder children

grew and thrived, though Cornelia was somewhat tried by her father's teaching mania. By this time the Councillor had begun Italian with his daughter, that beloved language in which he had, with the aid of an Italian master of languages, even written the earlier portions of an account of his travels. Wolfgang had to commit to memory his *Cellarius* in the room where, under their father's tutorship, his sister was getting her first Italian lessons: it must have been winter, else the boy could have stayed in his chamber next the roof. As he used soon to know the portion of *Cellarius* appointed, he had time to listen over the top of his book, and very quickly obtained some grasp of Italian, yet he made no very extended advance, though he used with his sister to learn the tasks set her.

Their mother was a model of a bright, busy, loyal German wife and matron; she shared with heartfelt sympathy the joys and sorrows of each of her family circle; still there was special delight and pride in the glance which rested on her Wolfgang who was growing up so well. She was already rather intimate with the devout Susanna Katharina von Klettenberg, who however, had not yet joined the Moravian community. Fraülein Klettenberg was niece of the wife of Frau Goethe's great-uncle, Major and Town-Commandant Johann Nicolaus Textor. To the cheery natural tone of feeling of Goethe's mother, the pietistic tendency was something quite alien, though she had been habituated to its note in the hymn phraseology of the day. We give here her contribution to a Fraülein von Bellersheim's Album, on the plan of which Bogatzky's *Golden Treasury of the Children of God* was drawn up. Beside Frau Goethe, other people belonging to the Klettenberg circle have made entries, mostly in the years 1752-1754.

Spring 1758 saw the internal arrangements of the house at last complete. On May 1 the Councillor had various things

which were only in his way publicly sold, among them some woodwork, the old *Geräms*, three house-clocks, a violin, an

So sey'st du nun von mir erlöset,  
 du in Christi Ernt' allzeit.  
 Mein Mund und mein Ohr,  
 mein Herz und mein Sinn.  
 Und mein bester Wunsch  
 mein Glaube und mein  
 mein Erbe dir mit  
 und mein Erbe dir mit  
 Dieses Sey'st du nun  
 an dem. E. C. Goethe gab. Engländer

FACSIMILE 2. Entry in an album, by Goethe's Mother, here for the first time printed from the original in the Hirzel "Goethe Collection" in the Library of the University of Leipzig.

ebony German flute—these musical instruments were probably left by his father—a number of law-books, of books on practice, and historical books. So Wolfgang had experience of an auction in the house of his parents, at which he had to bear a hand and help his father.

Wolfgang had in March begun to translate some exercises which the Conrector of the *Gymnasium* had set to several head-class boys for imitation of the historian Justinus. Dating from his birth-month, August, we find "*Morning good-wishes*," of each day, which Wolfgang himself had "thought out and wished for dearest father." They are in German only, until the 14th, then from the 15th to the 17th Latin and German, from the 18th to the 20th Greek takes the place of Latin, after the 20th Latin holds its own to the end. The Greek

is written without accents, and is evidently the production of a mere beginner. One of the German "sentences" is a hexameter. A little further, on a new page, we find seven "*New Good-Wishes*," all in three tongues, Greek, Latin, and German. Here the Greek is generally accented, but has mistakes in spelling and grammar. Farther on, we meet Hosea, chapter vi. verse 1, in German, French, Latin, and Greek; there are mistakes in the rendering into the two latter languages. Perhaps they had only just been received into the regular course of instruction when these translations were made. Finally, the manuscript has a "*Guide to the German-Hebrew Language*" (rather "*Handwriting*"), an indication that the boy had perhaps at this time overcome his dislike of the "chosen people." But instruction in German was not forgotten. It was a delight to his father to see Wolfgang read the most instructive poets of his library, though to himself their rhymes had not the charm of the Italian. The absence of rhyme in Klopstock's *Messias* made that poem a torture to him. How the Bavarian Agent Schneider smuggled in this poem; how the children revelled in it, particularly in the Dream of Portia, even more in the gruesome dialogue between Satan and Adramelech; how their recital of this dialogue was near causing a dreadful accident; and how after this a stricter *veto* than ever banished the offending *Messias*, is generally known from Goethe's own narrative.

The winter evenings were usefully spent. Rath Goethe disapproved of cards and other round games; as entertainment he had an instructive book read aloud; and he saw that it was read to the end, however tedious the children found it, for his maxim was "Always finish what you have begun." The serious man carried out with unwavering decision everything which seemed to him beneficial. Thus he himself gave the children lessons in dancing, to which he



would play some air on a *flûte douce* in three-quarter time. But however his many whims and hobbies plagued them, the children had a reverential attachment for one so earnestly intent on their welfare. Their fullest love and desire indeed was towards their young mother, who laughed and rejoiced with them, taking life so cheerily. What a charm her presence breathes in *Hermann und Dorothea*; where too the Host of the Golden Lion has some touches of Councillor Goethe.

Intimate as the Goethes were with so many well-to-do families, the children had no lack of companionship of equal age. Here Wolfgang was prominent, his great talents, the skill inherited from his mother to delight willing listeners with exciting stories, and a certain air of distinction, gave him mastery even over boys older than himself. "We were always the lackeys," said the elder Moors, the neighbour and friend of Wolfgang whom we already know, in after years to the Frau Rath. And when his mother once represented to Wolfgang how he distinguished himself among his companions by the upright carriage inherited from his father and by a certain dignity, it is said that he replied: "he might make a beginning with that; later on he would distinguish himself in everything." Another time, it is related, he called on the stars propitious to him for their aid, adding a little later that what sufficed for other people would not suffice for him. We must picture the boy in the Sunday suit described by Goethe himself, with hair curled and powdered, with locks standing out well from his head, hat under arm, sword at side, a long silken ribbon running through the bow at its hilt, great silver buckles on his shoes, fine cotton stockings, black serge breeches and some pretty coat and waistcoat. We would not guarantee that these last were the coat of green barracan with gold facings and the waistcoat of gold brocade described in

the child's tale *The New Paris*. He does not himself mention the hair bag which he wore according to the not very reliable account of Bettina von Arnim. Bettina sends him on visits to acquaintances in dress-coat, silk stockings and shoes, only when at home wearing surtout, long trousers, and boots. All clothes were made at home ; his father would not take a man-servant who did not understand tailoring.

On Sunday afternoons Wolfgang paid visits to his young friends, with whom he had many other meetings too, both for schooling and for play. Among them, we know, were the two neighbour boys Moors ; the second son of Olenschlager, born 1751,—his elder brother was deaf and dumb ;—and a boy called Hüsgen, four years older than Wolfgang. Also with Karl Allesina von Schweitzer, the son of a rich trader, he seems to have been by this time acquainted, and indeed with many children of the middle class. That Wolfgang could not conceal a certain pride in his grandfather's high dignity excited the ill-will of many boys, and they vented it on him in various ways. The worst was when one of the malicious fellows taunted his father to him with being the natural son of a man of high rank. How the thought of this excited him is told at length by himself ; in his childish fantastic brain he felt pleased by it, not understanding the shame of such a birth.

In any case in this intercourse with others of his own age there would be no lack of boyish scuffles ; but at that time nothing could appeal more strongly to children's delight in mimicry than playing at soldiers and war, in which Wolfgang was of course always on the Prussian side. Goethe mentions these "*Parteiungen, Gefechte und Schläge*" ("factions, fights, and blows"), as closely connected with the armoury which he, with the help of a servant, had stocked for their dramas and tragedies. But indeed the drilling of the Frankfurt contingent, and the marching through of French battalions,

would have excited the boys to play at soldiers. The dreadful battles of Zorndorf (August 28th, 1758), and of Hochkirchen (Oct. 14th, 1758), stirred the young souls : they little thought how soon their own city would be a station for French troops. It was Goethe's grandfather Textor who conducted the negotiations with Vienna attendant on this.



## CHAPTER IV.

### FROM THE ENTRY OF FRENCH TROOPS INTO FRANKFURT-AM-MAIN TO THEIR DEPARTURE.

1759-1762.

THE festivities of New Year's Day, 1759, had been cheerily celebrated. At noon on January 2d, 7000 French soldiers entered Frankfurt, under a plea of a march through, to which only one battalion at a time was entitled. They overpowered first the Guard at the *Affenthor* in Sachsenhausen, then Major and Town-Commandant Textor, in presence of the Constable Guard at the *Bornheim* Gate, then the Guard itself; finally the main Guard within the town. Thus by concerted treachery the hereditary enemy of the Imperial city (though now her Emperor's ally), entered into possession for the first time. The severe burden of quartering soldiers fell on the citizens. Councillor Goethe had to give up his ground floor, so handsome, the earliest furnished part of the house, to King's Lieutenant Thorane, from Mouans, near Grasse in Provence. Personally this man was kind-hearted, highly cultivated, a lover of art; but as an officer his action was based on the theory, that citizens are to receive with contented mind any insults which it may please officers their lords to inflict. And the Frankfurt Town Council was not strong enough to protect the rights of the people. The

betrayed city was treated as if it had been acquired by conquest. Councillor Goethe, a good Frankfurter, who cursed the French and those who let them in, was galled by constant reminder of the fact that he was no longer master in his own house. With his troubled spirit, he could not continue to give to the teaching and culture of his Wolfgang the loving carefulness of earlier years. Wolfgang had lost his dear room at the top of the house, for Thorane had appropriated it as a studio for Frankfurt painters, from whom he ordered a set of pictures to adorn the castle of his brother. In the first fortnight of this hated occupancy occurred the death of Wolfgang's long-ailing brother, Hermann Jakob, in his seventh year; there had been no very close bond between the brothers. With the beginning year had been found a special master of the ancient languages in Scherbius, at a later time to play an absurd part as *Prorektor* of the Frankfurt *Lokalposse*. At the end of that manuscript mentioned above (p. 29) are some passages for exercise in Greek and Latin dictated by this Scherbius. The Greek is still very faulty.

The stirring doings at home and the excited military liveliness of the city were a great delight to the bright boy; his regret that these enemies of Frederick were masters of Frankfurt forgot itself in careless light-heartedness the more easily as he gained greater freedom thereby. His mother tried to accommodate herself to these changed circumstances, which had their extreme unpleasantness for her too—circumstances, the blame of which was laid by so many, including her husband, on the shoulders of her father—and she strove after her fashion to mould them into something tolerable. From Diene, the interpreter lodged in the house, she got lessons in the to her as yet unknown language of the unwelcome but so cheerful and courteous guests. Nor did her boy let slip the opportunity of improving his French. The occupation of his

native city was a new agency indeed in his whole culture, as is always the knowledge of a foreign people, especially one so civilised as the French. Alas, however, the French garrison, in which were many Germans, introduced the greatest depravity among all classes. Though Wolfgang had been brought up by his father in delicate purity, and though the proud seriousness which scares away inconvenient jesting and unseemliness had breathed its power upon him, there were yet traces of the light life now surrounding him left when it had passed away.

Hope in vain was roused in the Frankfurt partisans of Prussia by the approach of Duke Ferdinand of Brunswick, who, collecting his army at Fulda, marched towards Frankfurt. On April 13th, 1759—it was Good Friday—the French, under Broglio met him at Bergen and defeated him. Councillor Goethe, in order to welcome the expected victorious Prussians, had betaken himself to his vineyard outside the *Friedberger Gate*. The grim disappointment of the issue sent him back to the city gloomy and morose, and when he saw the Prussian prisoners and wounded his wrath became frenzy. In the evening the matter came to a head in an outburst of passion on the King's Lieutenant ; and but for the prudence of his agonised wife, and of the interpreter, he would have been severely punished. His mood henceforth was the bitterer that he had thus hardly escaped chastisement, and that there was less hope than before of a speedy dislodgment of his overbearing guests.

Soon after the occupation of the town, at any rate during the Easter Fair, which began on Tuesday the 17th of April, French actors played "*par permission de Monseigneur le Maréchal Duc de Broglio et de Messieurs les Magistrats de la ville libre de Francfort*" in the extemporised theatre, the *Junghof* on the *Rossmarkt*, near the *Hirschgraben* ; and these

French actors gave place every second day to German actors. During former fair-times Wolfgang had been spectator of not only puppet-shows, but of real acting; now the free pass which his grandfather had secured to him the longed-for opportunity of frequently seeing the French drama. It was some time, however, before his father would yield to the urgency of Wolfgang and his mother, who laid stress on the advantage of becoming familiar with the language; they were more likely to influence Rath Goethe thus than by any reference to culture in a wider sense. The Frau Rath, who, knowing minutely her husband's ways, had great power with him, trusted in this indulgence, as in others accorded at a later time to Wolfgang through her influence, that his good disposition and friendly Destiny would save him from harm, and her trust was not misplaced. Wolfgang became familiar with many pretty operettas, the current comedies of Destouches, Marivaux, and the tearful La Chaussée, Diderot's Hausvater (*Père de Famille*); and in tragedy, Lemierre's new play *Hypermnestre*. All this was especially profitable in that it sent him to read Racine. So many frivolous representations would indeed have been only too well calculated to shake his moral structure, had there not been counter-agencies at work: the serious dignity of his father; the pure noble instinct of his mother's heart: the deep tender soul of his sister Cornelia, with her bright intelligence. With this sister he was left quite alone, when in August 1759, the surpassingly fair little girl who had been such a delight to him died in the third year of her short life.

He visited not only the French but the German theatre. Goethe himself relates, that in argument with his father he appealed to the good examples in Lessing's *Miss Sara Sampson* and in *Der Kaufmann von London* (a German translation of Lillo's tragedy). His frequent recourse to the

French theatre had meanwhile another important issue. At first, while he still understood the language but imperfectly, he used not to sit out the representations, but spent a considerable time playing about the theatre doors with other boys. It was thus that he made towards the close of the year (1759) the acquaintance of one boy whom he had seen several times on the stage, a bragging lip-hero, who brought him behind the scenes.<sup>1</sup> There, when dress was being changed or assumed, he saw much that was unseemly, and often indeed improper behaviour.

An important aid in culture was the intercourse with the painters employed by Thorane. Some of these he knew already, for his father had had dealings with the native artists of Frankfurt; but now they had taken up their position in his own room, where he could be present not only during their conferences with the Count, but while they were at work. He learned a good deal by asking and listening; after a little he even suggested subjects for pictures.

In the beginning of 1760 Rath Goethe complained to his father-in-law, the chief magistrate, that Thorane, with his new pictures, was taking every room in the house; but it was no light matter to order off a king's lieutenant, and nothing was done. A christening-feast of the Pastor Starck saw new complaining rise to a violent war of words between Rath Goethe and the chief magistrate; it is said that the former in his passion cursed the gold which Textor got for treachery, and cursed the men who had let in the French. Then Textor flung a knife at his son-in-law, who drew his sword, so the story runs, and only with great difficulty did Frau Textor bring about reconciliation.

It may be asked why Councillor Goethe did not, under the present circumstances, send his son to the *Gymnasium*?

<sup>1</sup> Derones.—Tr.



With the rector Albrecht, very learned, but very shrewish, proof against all the charms of nature and the world, he was on the friendliest terms. Albrecht was a declared foe to all private schools and private tutors, and even in his programmes expressed with his own peculiar bitterness his anger against people who would not see the advantages of a public school. But many there were at that time who thought that the Frankfurt *Gymnasium* taught nothing but insolence and wrongdoing; and as the rector stood ill with the school-governors above, and with the masters beneath, nothing was done to remedy the crying evil. So the causes which prevented Wolfgang's father from entrusting him to the *Gymnasium* were, first, a reasonable care for the boy's moral purity; then an old, at one time firmly-fixed, dislike to the Frankfurt institution (we have seen his own father send him to Coburg); more efficient probably than either, a conviction that Wolfgang's wonderful powers ought to be developed by a very rapid many-sided training.

He had allowed himself to be moved only so far as to employ a *Gymnasium* master to teach the ancient languages. In this, however, Latin was preferred far before Greek; in the latter, Wolfgang's utmost skill was to read the New Testament. Wolfgang seems to have hardly glanced into Homer. He had learned something of the great poet a couple of years earlier; but, alas, only through the *New Collection of the most remarkable Tales of Travel, brought into Historical and Geographical Sequence and Order, by a Committee of Savants*. This book, which he found in Pastor Starck's library, had begun to appear in stately quarto volumes, in 1749, at Frankfurt. In the seventh volume (1754) there was a prose translation under the definite title, *Homer's Account of the Subjugation of the Trojan Kingdom*. It had engravings of Troy heroes in modern knightly costume; the spirit of poetry was not in it.

Meanwhile, the theatre engrossed more and more Wolfgang's time and thoughts. He even confesses an attraction towards the sister of his young French friend. She was older than either of the boys, "an amiable but silent girl;" she received his attentions with pleasure, and that was all. Having constantly gained ground in the foreign language, he felt urged by his delight in the half-mythologic, half-allegoric after-pieces which he saw, to compose something like them; and the achievement was easy to his imagination, stimulated by the passage of kings' daughters, and gods, and heroes across the stage. It was perhaps just then that he first read the account of the heathen gods, as set forth in the then current *Pantheum mythicum* of the Jesuit Pomey. Of course the young French braggart let play a chilling criticism on this performance of Wolfgang; it was an opportunity of making well felt his superiority in knowing the language and the faultless literature of France. One result of his improving remarks was, that Wolfgang sought to gain some clear views on the three so-called Unities of the French stage. To this end he read Corneille's *Second Discours sur la Tragédie*, and the prefaces in which Corneille and Racine have expressed themselves on their plays. From such data he formed his concept of the French drama, and even began, as we know from himself, to write a piece in French Alexandrines, but the project soon lapsed.

Reading German poets constantly meanwhile, it is not wonderful that an impulse to do as they had done grew with his growth; and it was the more imperative, since to compose in one's mother-tongue seems so easy. He mentions the passion for making rhymes and verse which at private lessons he had observed to be excited in other children by reading the more modern poets of Germany; at an early age he himself found it delightful to pass from rhetorical to poetic treatment of his exercises. Besides the poets already named, he was drawn

towards the so-called Anacreontics,—Gleim, with his *Versuch in scherzhaften Liedern*; Uz, with his *Lyrische und andere Gedichte*; Weisse, with his *Scherzhafte Lieder*. In verse so light and flexible, of such fugitive import, he could turn off poems with great rapidity. Towards sacred poetry, too, his restless imitative faculty was applied. On the model of the hymns set to the hymn-book tunes he wrote his own, and thought that they were at least as worthy to be set and sung as their prototypes. At the Sunday gatherings of the young friends with whom he kept up a steady intercourse, more and more independent of parental supervision, there was competitive recitation of such verses. Of course each thought his own lines the best; but on one occasion, the task of producing extempore verse being imposed, Wolfgang reaped a harvest of unanimous praise. And all these more or less happy attempts aided the development of his mastery of words, of his general power of conception.

Before the early-ripe boy was twelve years old, it seemed good to his father to have him confirmed: much steadying of character might be hoped to result from the ceremony. The Sunday-preacher of the *Grey Friars* Church undertook to prepare Wolfgang. This man was looked on by Rath Goethe as the best clergyman of the city—Dr. John Philip Fresenius; he died so soon after this as July 4th 1761. Fresenius laid great stress on Oral Confession; all he wanted, however, was an acknowledgment of sin in general terms; there was an introduction to the subject in his *Book for Confession and Communion*. A gentle spiritual rendering of the truths of Christianity, not the ossified thing of standing formulas and propositions, would have edified and elevated the keen young mind always striving after the real direct presentation of things, and interpenetration of soul. But this dead formula knowledge, with no relation to an actual need, seemed to him



distasteful and unworthy. So this early endeavour to give the boy a definite religious stay through union with the Christian body missed the mark.

Soon after, Councillor Goethe's many complaints about the burthen of quartering imposed on him had perhaps success, at any rate ceased, as Thorane in June 1761 left Frankfurt for some time. To be secure from further imposition, the Councillor had to make up his mind to let his ground-floor. An old friend, the Circle Ambassador, Heinrich Friedrich Moritz, from Worms, Director of Chancery of Solms-Rödelheim, a man who lived only for his business, occupied with his small quiet family the apartments vacated by Thorane. Frequently this new inmate's younger and livelier brother, the Danish Councillor of Legation, Johann Friedrich Moritz, likewise a Circle Ambassador and Resident, paid a visit. He liked talking with Wolfgang, and taught him mathematics. He belonged to the pious Klettenberg set; a Herr von Bülow, who excluded women from his Sunday meetings, was just then its apostle. The boy now got back his dear room at the top of the house. Rath Goethe was bright and light-hearted, since his late causes of vexation were gone. On the eve of his son's birthday, he joined the brothers Moritz in petitioning the Council to aid in the purchase of firewood for the poor, who were suffering much from the general high prices: the petition was unsuccessful. In this year (1761) died step-brother Hermann Jakob, member of the Council and tin-founder, who too had been prominently hostile to the French; as he died childless his inheritance fell to Rath Goethe.

Lessons, which had been rather irregular during the last two years, were now resumed with fresh energy and wider field. English was learned by the children, with their father's earnest approval, in four weeks from a master who professed celerity. Lessons in mathematics, drawing, the piano, and

perhaps singing, were added. The little mother could play and sing, and she was often called on to accompany the singing of the Italian master of languages already mentioned. Councillor Goethe, whose father, as we know, was a lover of music, liked playing both lute and flute. It does not appear that Wolfgang made much progress in piano-playing; perhaps the ability to play on the flute, which we know him to have had at Leipzig, was acquired in these Frankfurt days. He was now beyond the need of writing-lessons; this the careful copying out of his poems had done. That his exercises in various languages might have more attractive contents, he devised the imaginative form of a novel which should consist of letters written in different languages by several brothers and a sister. The introduction was to tell how the life together at home had gone until the brothers went out into the world, only the youngest remaining with their sister and parents. The sister writes telling all the tale of household and home; the Benjamin of the family adds an occasional humorous letter; while the brothers from the various places where they tarry for their culture send home each an account of his journey or his abiding. When Wolfgang wanted to give the sister the true girlish note he thought himself into the soul of his own sister; and to make her write, telling him as if he were far away all about herself and her life must have been no small delight to the young poet. The eldest brother in this novel, apparently on a journey for culture only, tells what he has seen in good German. The theologian of the family writes to the father in very formal Latin, with occasionally a postscript in Greek. To the brother who is a clerk at Hamburg is given English; to a younger brother at Marseilles, French; to a musician travelling in Italy, Italian; probably to the last named language there was more attention paid just then; the youngest—the stay-at-home—for his own peculiar use

had betaken himself to Jew-German. Thus, even here, was manifest the powerful poetic formative instinct by which the boy, now fast developing into the youth, was always compelled. Of dramatic creation there is next to nothing.

Meanwhile the Pietists, Herrnhuters, and other Separatists, had gained a strong footing in Frankfurt. Since Fresenius, the most influential clergyman in the city, had declared himself strongly opposed to these wilful off-branchings from the general body of God's servants, there was the more anxiety to know the position which Fresenius's successor, Plitt, would take. Especial subject of conversation was the course of sermons announced to be preached by Plitt between Trinity Sunday and Advent (1762); in which he meant to develop a certain religious system. Hearing the talk, Wolfgang, always mentally active and ready for new efforts, conceived the notion of producing an exact transcript from memory of these sermons; he had already performed feats of the kind. He listened carefully in church, and noted certain hold-fast points; when service was over he hurried home, immediately dictated to his father's secretary the whole sermon, and was able to hand it in before dinner. His pleasure in this performance indeed soon ebbed, for the sermons had little to attract him; but his father, whose maxim, as we know, was "Finish what you have begun," would not have him break off until the course ceased. However his transcript shrank continually from its first fair proportions, containing at last only the text, the general theme, and the heads.

About this time Wolfgang and his sister took part in acting some French and German plays. Their neighbour von Olenschlager had occasionally dramatic representations in the hall of his house; his second son and other children of the same age were the performers. So Wolfgang played the hero of the then favourite *Canut* of Elias Schlegel; in

Racine's *Britannicus* he was the emperor; his sister was Estrithe and Agrippina in either play; young Olenschlager Ulfo and Britannicus.

In this year (1762) Hebrew was enclosed in the widening circle of acquirement. Since in the Jew-German to be represented in his polyglot novel many words are borrowed from Hebrew, Wolfgang begged his father to have him taught the old language in its purity; the Rector of the *Gymnasium*, the Albrecht already mentioned, was the man for this. In spite of the tiresomeness of reading difficult characters and of learning forms and paradigms by heart, Wolfgang was for a long time kept staunch to this undertaking by his teacher, until at length impatience hurried him away from the language of the Old Testament Books to their matter. Then after the first half-hour he used regularly to break out with his questions and doubts, by which the rector, helpless to meet them, became at length much troubled. However, he sent Wolfgang to the great Bible Commentary in his own library, and in this book the boy often buried himself until night surrounded him. At length the rector even gave him a volume to take home, that he might more at his ease find explanation—explanation which, it may be remarked, left him for the most part unconvinced.

He had been early used to do many commissions for his father. For instance, he was employed by the latter to make purchases at the auction of the Art Collection of Baron von Häckel (died Jan. 1760—there was a lawsuit about the Baron's inheritance), and the boy had had to stay at the auction from beginning to end. He had made some small bids on his own account too. More tending to culture than such a commission were the appointments at which he met painters and goldsmiths, where he gained clearer and more exact knowledge of all that has to do with art. We hear of his valuable



intercourse with Juncker, the painter of sixty ; how he learned much about jewels and their setting from frequent visits to the goldsmith Lautensack, which he made on account of a beautiful new snuffbox ordered for his mother, to be worn at the peace celebration festivities. And he often went to the goldsmith Schöll whose silhouette plate and pantograph interested him. Appended is one of the silhouettes then taken. Often the boy visited the great oil-cloth factory of the painter Nothnagel, where he saw the painting of flowers of all kinds, of landscapes and of figures, grew familiar with the activity of many younger and older workers, nay probably at times used the brush himself.



A peculiar trait of Goethe connected with his craving for rich suggestion and living experience, is his love of intercourse with older men of ability, though the idiosyncrasy might differ from his own, even to opposition. He names three such men each with his share of oddity, but of sterling value ; no doubt his adhesion to them was the firmer because of the flattery of their peculiar fondness, and their high expectation of his worth ; more than their own children they loved him, and each would have been glad to see in him the realisation of a cherished ideal. We have already met the first of these, the Sheriff and younger Bürgermeister von Olen-schlager, "a handsome, agreeable, sanguine man," whose disposition was to court and state affairs ; and so he wanted to make Wolfgang, with whom he was often very confidential, a fine courtier : any attempt to distinguish oneself as poet seemed to him very little worth. The two others were

FIG. 5. After the Frankfurt *Gedenkblätter an Goethe*.

more repellent natures. The Polish and Saxon Aulic Privy-Councillor, Friedrich Ludwig von Reineck, of an ancient noble family, through his stubborn self-will had fallen out with every one; his own daughter had fled from the tyranny which had destroyed her happiness. This gloomy hater of mankind often asked his son's household playmate, young Goethe, to dine with them. He would have been only too glad to win Wolfgang to misanthropy; instead of this, intercourse with the charming gifted boy calmed and softened him and developed the benevolence which lay beneath his external acridity. Of poetry, he of course knew less than Olenschlager; he wished to direct Wolfgang to a diplomatic career, and accordingly talked to him much of the international affairs of the world. The third in this discordant trio was the Brandenburg-Ansbach Councillor and Anhalt-Köthen Aulic Councillor and Agent Friedrich Wilhelm Hüsgen, a decided pessimist, whose face was repulsive by the disfigurement of pockmarks and the loss of the left eye. But Wolfgang, while very young, came to know him, and drew closer and closer to him as time went by; the man attracted him so by wide knowledge, by cheerfulness and order of surroundings, and even by their loneliness; the only son, then of but little promise, clung altogether to his mother. Hüsgen was an excellent jurist, but being a Calvinist could not practise as advocate, and only in very important matters would people make use of him for consultation. Like Wolfgang's father, Hüsgen hoped to see the boy a lawyer yet; a trade, he said, necessary that one may defend one's own against the pack of scoundrels called mankind: that there may be some one to stand by the oppressed; and, perhaps, to expose the rascal, though that is not always either easy or profitable.

But also intercourse with younger friends, life spent in his

wide branching family and its large circle of acquaintances, helped to stimulate in Wolfgang a fresh joyous power of sympathy. And yet at this period (1762-3) he was deep in the Bible idyll of patriarchal life, a whole new world of poetry to him. As for the manifold contradictions which he found in the Holy Books, he cleared them all easily enough after his fashion. From a very early age the touching story of Joseph had a deep charm for him ; on subjects drawn from it he had already designed and minutely described twelve pictures, some of which had been really executed by friendly painters. Now, a literary poetic treatment of the story hovered before his mind's eye, only the suitable form was wanting, for the verse of the *Messias* he thought too stately and measured. Since a distinct portrayal of the religious life of the patriarchal time would be necessary, it seemed to him of great importance to know the present customs of the Jews. The race had on a first acquaintance excited in him strong repulsion, but he had long ago put off his dislike ; and he was not content until he had not only visited their school, but been present at a circumcision and a wedding, and got a peep at their Feast of Tabernacles. And he now had a friendly greeting for the pretty Jewish maidens who on the Sabbath went to walk on the *Fischerfeld*, the Council having ordered that "all Jews and Jewesses should absolutely refrain from walking on the *Rossmarkt*," where polite society took its exercise.

By the 3d of November 1762 a provisional peace put an end to the war by sea between France and England ; three weeks later Austria and Prussia made a truce, though only within the bounds of Silesia and Saxony. In December 1762 Frankfurt was freed from her French visitors, who for almost four years [since January 1759] had domineered over and ill-treated her ; who had thwarted her justice, scorned her freedom, and debased her morals. In the



occupation of his native city by the talented frivolous neighbour race there had been much gain for Wolfgang's culture ; but the evil air had at least blown on the delicate bloom of boyish purity, and if happily no disease was the result, he had been saved by the good moral discipline of his father, the love of his mother, the noble heart of the sister who clung to him so tenderly, and his own healthy nature.

## CHAPTER V.

FROM THE CLOSE OF THE SEVEN YEARS' WAR TO WOLFGANG'S  
DEPARTURE FOR LEIPZIG.

1763-1765.

IN honour of the sudden peace concluded February 15th, 1763, the Frau Rath was presented with the snuff-box, which through Wolfgang's unceasing urgency had been at last finished ; it was adorned with diamonds and an image of Peace. In March the festival music composed by *Capellmeister* Fischer was performed ; as to which the report ran : " The author of the words is a distinguished poet,"—perhaps the same " famed poet of our city " who had supplied the verses for the "*Thanksgiving and Harvest-festival music*," performed in the beginning of November 1762. Our Wolfgang was not excited to any poetic jubilation by the long anticipated peace. To his heart just then lay nearer his *Joseph* of the Eastern patriarchal time. The fitting form for his idea had been indicated by Friedrich Karl von Moser's prose heroic poem, *Daniel in der Löwengrube* (*Daniel in the Lions' Den*) just published. He had long thought out the details of his work, the far lands in which the action lay had grown very familiar to him, and he now flung himself eagerly on the complete development of it. Bound by no restraint of verse, aided by the external peacefulness, even exaltation of the time, he moved on rapidly ;

and then the happy progress freshened his ardour. It was, moreover, his good fortune that he had not to write down the poem himself, but could dictate it to a young man of weak mind then living in the house, who liked writing very much. This was that Clauer, who before the rebuilding had lived in the Goethes' neighbour house, and to have to leave it had so pained him that he became deranged. Rath Goethe, interested in him, had later on taken him in again : he acted as a kind of scribe. It is said that the youngest sister of Goethe's mother—the sister who married Pastor Starck—had been intended for Clauer. Wolfgang made use of him ; to him had probably dictated Plitt's sermons. When *Joseph* was happily finished, it occurred to the young author to add a number of such earlier efforts as seemed worthy ; with the whole collection, under the name *Vermischte Gedichte* (*Miscellaneous Poems*), he meant next New Year's day to delight his father.

Meanwhile his father had with great energy urged on the boy's culture, had even already begun the special training to the law. He had placed in Wolfgang's hands *Examen institutionum imperialium*, the work—composed in question and answer form—of whilom Professor Joachim Hoppe of Danzig. Wolfgang was soon quite at home in this book. Beside this ran a diligent study of the Latin classics, while Greek, as not useful to a lawyer, fell back. In this year (1763) probably began lessons in fencing and riding ; for this father would have his son early skilful in all bodily exercises. Swimming, however, Wolfgang did not learn : inland Germany then cared little for it. His beginnings in skating too belong to a later time.

Now greater freedom being yielded to him, he lived a merry life with his playmates, and engaged in some not very dreadful youthful sallies. Among his young Frankfurt friends

we find none of remarkable gifts. The boy drew gladly towards joyous, kindly hearty companions, among whom he could throw off reserve. Some of these we have already met ; here we shall make the acquaintance of two others, who just at this time emerge into greater importance. They are good-hearted, witty Johann Jacob Riese, three years older than Wolfgang ; and Johann Adam Horn, always ready for fun and mad tricks, called Hörnchen (*Hornkin*) because so small of stature. Both were to devote themselves to law studies at the same time as Wolfgang. In close intimacy with them was a certain Kehr, who was for some time a private tutor ; to whom Goethe later on sends greeting from Leipzig.

Now too, perhaps, he made the acquaintance of Johann Bernhard Crespel, who had been brought up in the Jesuit schools, and who while still in the cradle had been appointed Councillor by Prince Thurn and Taxis. Born in Frankfurt two years before Wolfgang, and having been long absent from his native city, Crespel was now in the later half of 1763 living there with his father, a rich jeweller. Goethe's friendship with his fellow-townsmen Klinger must have begun about this time, for Goethe in his last years referred to having played near the pump of his father's house with Klinger, who was three years his junior. Klinger grew up amid hard circumstances : his father having died early in the boy's life, he had to earn his bread for a time by manual labour ; but his talent was noticed by Professor Zinck, who had him received into the *Gymnasium*, where his progress was quite correspondent to the great expectations of him. To Rath Goethe's home the general stir about the poor young scholar would be one passport of admittance ; another being that Klinger's father had been in the service of a now dead friend von Lersner ; von Lersner's eldest son was godfather to young Klinger.

Of girl acquaintance in friendly families there was no lack

to the charming bright, gifted boy. His sister had grown very intimate with the three carefully educated daughters of the rich merchant Gerock, all older than herself; they enjoyed life in easy comfort; the second seems to have been extremely attached to Wolfgang. Then there were Crespel's two sisters, also friends of Cornelia; the elder, Maria Katharina, was some days older than Wolfgang; the other, Franziska Jacobea, more than three years younger. There was, too, delightful intimacy with Charitas Meixner from Worms, who stayed for her education three years with her uncle, Councillor of Legation Moritz. Cornelia herself, to whom he was attached with the most confiding affection, loved natural cheerfulness and a free open manner speaking the real heart meanings; a cold bearing emptied of all feeling, was as distasteful to her on one hand as frivolous lightness on the other. No one could with deeper recognition than she greet and love the pure presence of a noble soul growing and opening free as a flower to the air, and so her devotion to her brother was noble and comprehending. By her personal dignity she ruled the circles in which she moved, though her features were not beautiful or imposing; a deep regret to herself. But her eyes were, as Goethe says, the deepest kind, behind which one expects the greatest things, and when they expressed good-will or affection there was nothing like their shining. We give here a picture of her hurriedly sketched in 1773, by Wolfgang, on the wide margin of a proof-sheet of *Götz*. The mode of arranging hair then customary makes even longer the arched brow with which she was herself so impatient; the great likeness to her brother is plain, but the sharp emergence of the outlines produced by the head-dress, the prominent eye, and the definite eyebrow and nose, contribute to give a certain *strongness* to the countenance.

Goethe himself relates, with the plainness peculiar to him, how he about this time had made the acquaintance of some



young people of low social standing, who misused his verse-making powers to play mischievous practical jokes. He tells how he made little excursions in this company to Höchst, no very great distance; on one of these excursions they introduced an acquaintance of theirs to Wolfgang, who asked his grandfather to give to this stranger a place just then vacant. In one of the homes thus opened to him, Wolfgang met a girl named Gretchen somewhat older than himself, and he became much attached to her. Once having forgotten his house-key he had to spend a night with the set — Gretchen included — in a sitting-room. Then they made a trade of selling the verses which Wolfgang produced; and still his passion for the girl grew, though she



FIG. 6. After *Goethes Briefe an Leipziger Freunde*. Herausgegeben von Otto Jahn.

was far from encouraging it, on the contrary constantly gave him good advice. Passavant, a friend of Goethe in later life, knew that the house in which Wolfgang met Gretchen was close to Peter's Church, which, with its large churchyard, was situated in the northern part of Frankfurt.

Meanwhile his father urged with unabated vigour his legal

and general studies. Probably by this time the little *Hoppe* had been replaced by *Jurisprudentia Romano-Germanica forensis*, written by the Jena professor, George Adam Struve, dead since the end of the seventeenth century. Now again, after eighteen years, Frankfurt was to see the Election and Coronation of the German King; and so Rath Goethe thought it well with his son to go over the daily accounts of the last two Elections and Coronations, in order to make clear to the boy the additional capitulation conditions of this occasion, and the significance of this important Imperial Ceremony on the whole. By the end of November 1763, it was known that the Electoral Assembly was to begin its sittings on January 4th, 1764, at the old place, Frankfurt—not Augsburg, as at first arranged. By decree of the Council an official on horseback, accompanied by four trumpeters also mounted and a guard on foot, proclaimed in twenty-one parts of the city—and thus of course near the *Hirschgraben*—this ordinance;—“That all contracts with strangers about houses within the city should be void during the Election and Coronation, and that the said houses should be placed at the disposal of the City Quartering Committee for the new-comers of the time.” Heinrich Friedrich Moritz had soon after the departure of the French left Rath Goethe’s first story; it was now given to a chevalier from the Electoral Palatinate who came in January; and the upper story was given to the Nürnberg Counsellor König of Königsthal, who did not come until February. So the family found its quarters for a short time narrower than even during the French occupation.

In order that his father might hear what was going on Wolfgang had to spend a great deal of time from home; he was even required to write little themes on what he saw. Everywhere bustle and life, especially since these days of splendour coincided with Shrove-Tide. There was Italian opera, there was



French comedy and German drama, there were magic lantern exhibitions; every kind of spectacle indeed, beside no lack of public and masked balls. Amid all this Wolfgang found many opportunities of meeting Gretchen. The postponed electoral assembly began on the 4th of March; the elective capitulation was settled by the 9th; on the 21st took place the public entry of the Elector Bishop of Mainz; three days later that of the two other Ecclesiastical Electors. On the 26th all strangers had to leave the city, for next day should see the actual election. Then on the evening of the 28th arrived the insignia of the kingdom; on the 29th the late chosen King was solemnly received. A festival of thanksgiving and rejoicing on the 1st of April was followed by the coronation on the 3d. How on that evening Wolfgang, in partial disguise, with Gretchen on his arm, saw the splendid illumination is described in detail in *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, and how, when late that night, he parted from Gretchen at her door she for the first and last time kissed his forehead.

Meanwhile it had been notified to the Town-Council that in the Record Office (*Gerichtskanzlei*) monies had been purloined; and that other underhand work had been going on; in all which special guilt was laid to the charge of that assistant who had last year been appointed at Wolfgang's recommendation. When examined, he revealed how he had come to know Wolfgang, the kind of company kept by the latter, and how he passed his evenings. When all this was told to Wolfgang's father he was terribly stirred. With difficulty Frau Rath persuaded him to give the questioning of Wolfgang to their intimate friend Schneider (the smuggler of the *Messias*), who was so fond of Wolfgang. Almost half a century later Goethe, with great freedom of treatment, tells how, the morning after the coronation, Schneider, with tears in his eyes, came to the dear room on the top story; how sorrowful questioning was at first

met by hesitation, by evasion—how at last full confession to the old friend was seen to be the best. The statement that every kind of deceit played its part in the subsequent inquiry has been refuted by an examination of the Criminal Registers of Frankfurt, which have come down to us entire. It was a great pain to Wolfgang that people should know of his intimacy with such companions; a still greater that so rude an end was put to his loving intercourse with Gretchen. He gave himself to the tempest of his grief: he *could* not go when his father invited him to see the last festivities of the Coronation time. Only when on April 12, their bitter reminder of his sorrow ceased, could he be persuaded out-of-doors. According to his own account his pining lasted long; and at length it was thought well to bring into the house a friend of his older than himself, who had until lately been tutor with people known to the Goethes; the room next Wolfgang's was given to him. This may have been a certain Müller who seems to have been intimate with the family of Johann Friedrich Moritz. Two years later Wolfgang wrote that while Müller loved him he had supported his weakness, shared his joy, scared his gloom away.<sup>1</sup> In *Dichtung und Wahrheit* Goethe goes on to tell how this guardian, by repeating Gretchen's words, "I have always looked on him as a child," brought about the crisis of his melancholy-fever; for she then seemed to him a selfish coquette—still his heart was often tortured by the beloved familiar image of her. That with this friend he went through the history of ancient philosophy we may perhaps take as matter-of-fact statement of the truth; also that on long walks in the summer woods he tried his hand at sketches of the landscape, which, though imperfect and irregular, gave great pleasure to his father. Then his father ruled lines round each sketch, wishing to compel the

<sup>1</sup> In a letter written in French to Augustin Trapp, dated "ce 2 du Juin 1766." *Der junge Goethe*, i. 15-17.—TR.

draughtsman to completeness and thoroughness ;—whereas Wolfgang, who only cared that certain things which he had seen should be represented, had not in the least wanted the pictures to be complete or thorough in themselves. We further hear that in this friend's company he went to Homburg and Kronberg, climbed the Feldberg, where the wide view filled them with fresh longing for the distance ; Wiesbaden and Schwalbach he also visited ; saw from the bordering heights for the first time the silver stretches of the Rhine ; wondered at the splendours of Electoral Mainz ; and then home, content and calmed and gladdened.<sup>1</sup>

At any rate, we may suppose that Wolfgang, with that gift which was his through life, recovered from this shock sooner than the Autobiography would lead us to believe. Then, though a mysterious whisper may have run through Frankfurt, telling with the usual heightening the story, how the dignified child of such wonderful precocity had fallen into bad company, in which story a girl would play an important part, still this new thing would, like every other, soon grow old. And if many a spiteful fellow was glad at Wolfgang's calamity, and the moralisers were horrified for the time, still all must have been soon forgotten as a childish escapade. The physician Senckenberg, whose account of so many things, and especially of all relating to the Chief Magistrate Textor, is harsh and biting, has not a word to say of this Gretchen episode. In a letter, of date seven weeks later than the painful discovery of his secret, we meet such a calm composed Wolfgang, that we cannot believe in an agitation of the enduring kind described in *Dichtung und Wahrheit*. This letter relates to a *Jünglingsbund* of the time.

The young E.K.L. Isenburg von Buri<sup>2</sup> had at the estate

<sup>1</sup> *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, vi. Buch.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> Born June 1747 ; his father was Friedrich Karl Buri, ennobled in

Neuhof on the Main, almost three leagues from Offenbach, founded a Secret Society (*Geheimbund*). It was called the Arcadian Society (*Arcadische Gesellschaft*), after the Roman Society (*Accademia degli Arcadi*), of merely literary purpose. It was dedicated to God and Virtue, and on its seal was an Apollo with lyre and aureole. The date August 22, 1759, assigned for the founding of this society, seems perhaps intentionally placed too early; for Buri was the first President (*Archon*) of the Bund, and no one under fifteen could be Archon. A candidate to be received into the Society's membership must be over twelve and of "the proper worthiness." The Archon by himself was the first grade; the three next were the Praepositors (*Aufseher*), then the Noble Freeman (*edle Freien*)—who must be of noble blood and who had all the rights of the Proctors,—third, the Freeman (*Freien*). None of these grades could exceed twelve in number. Lowest of all was the grade of the ordinary members—the Commons (*die Gemeinen*), with no limit of number. At a later time, girl members appear. Four times in the year there were meetings; on the 14th of February; the 20th of May; the 22d of August; the 15th of November. The alternating place of assembly was called *Philandria*—probably Love of *Mankind*, not Love of *Men* is meant. The Archon might of his own authority enroll members. Young Archon Myrtill—viz. Buri, the founder—tried to get grown-up men and men of high rank for his Bund, and with considerable success; Prince Ludwig, of Hessen-Darmstadt, five months older than Wolfgang, was already a member. Wolfgang heard much praise of the Society from his friend von Schweitzer, who, under the name Alexis, was a Praepositor (*Aufseher*) of the

1753, first Directorial Councillor, then Privy-Councillor of Isenburg-Birstein and Governmental Director (*Isenburg-Birsteinische Direktorial-, später Geheimrath und Regierungsdirektor*).—DÜNTZER.



Bund. Still it was not in response to this friend's wish—expressed probably about the time of the Gretchen trouble—that Wolfgang joined. The resolve to do so was most likely due to his father. After the Frankfurt meeting of May 20th, 1764, Wolfgang, tired of endless delay, applied direct to the young Archon. The letter, dated May 23d, 1764, was dictated to a scribe, probably Clauer, from whose idiocy no understanding of the contents was to be feared. The composition of this remarkable letter is unusually formal. Since Buri, it says, must be aware that his merits have drawn hearts to him in lands more distant than the writer's, he cannot be astonished at the boldness of this letter. To the writer it were the deepest sorrow to be constrained to silence—to a prolongation of merely in secret revering Buri's great qualities—"Not one of those friends of mine who know you thinks that I shall be successful. Perhaps a little envy has something to do with this. But this moment the very best reason occurs to me; you will have no intimacy with a human being of imperfections such as mine, lest you should be called to account for doing so. Your Excellency (*Ew. Wohlgeboren*) must know well that we are only too glad to conceal our faults, when we wish to draw near to one whom we revere. I, however, am like the suitor in Rabener in this, that I make a preliminary confession of my sins. I know, of course, that the time spent over this rambling stuff will seem long to you; but what help for it? you must become aware of *this* fault of mine either before or after acquaintance. One of my chief defects is, I am rather hasty—you know what choleric temperaments are, do you not?—but then no one forgets an injury more easily than I. Further, I am used to giving orders; but where I have no authority, I can let things alone; and I will readily submit to such a jurisdiction as yours must be. At the very beginning of my letter, you will find my third fault;

—I write to you in a way familiar as if I had known you for a century, but it cannot be helped ; that is another habit which I shall never be rid of. I hope that your spirit, which is not the slave of such puerilities as Ceremonial will pardon me the absence of it ; though, believe me, I never neglect the due tribute of respect. A last item occurs to me ; I have one thing more in common with the character mentioned above—I am very impatient and cannot bear to remain long in uncertainty. I beg you to come to a decision as soon as possible. These are my cardinal sins. Your keen eye will detect a hundred more, which, however, will not, I hope, banish me from your favour, but everything will speak for me, and my faults as well as my zeal will bear witness to you that I remain, etc. etc.” In a postscript he adds that he is about the age of Alexis, of whose conduct in putting him off, feeding him with hopes from day to day, he complains bitterly. Three days later Buri, with polite waiving of the compliments of the letter, referred Wolfgang to this very Praepositor Alexis, from whom Buri would await a report. But Alexis implored the Archon “for God’s sake not to connect himself with Goethe,” whose *vices* (*Laster*) have been to Alexis a reason for not making him known to the Archon, and who is, therefore, now “turning *recta*” to the Head. *Laster* points direct to the bad company that Wolfgang had kept, of which Schweitzer must have heard, then as Arcadian Shepherd of Virtue turning his back on the goat ; beside therē was personal grievance in Wolfgang’s bold setting aside his mediation. If Wolfgang’s petition had shown a certain stiffness, his reply to the Archon on the 2d of June was a complete outpouring of himself ; that reference to Schweitzer made him hopeful ; he had no suspicion of an evil report from his friend. We give in facsimile this reply—the first complete preserved letter from Goethe’s own hand.



Juni. 1767.

Die

Gefährten und

Wife.

Dr. Zimmer

1767

von 2 bis 3  
Jahren

an Johann Ludwig Haen  
und seinen ich v.  
mich, wenn Sie ich  
haben, so finden Sie, daß  
Johann, Johann Geyll =

Kind = Kopf nachher  
innere Antwort!.

vgl. ich ich mich  
in Verschiedenheit ist v.  
H.

ich ich nicht mehr, ab  
gegenüber den Verschieden,  
nicht immer bleiben

Buri and Schweitzer do not seem to have had any further negotiations ; the former merely tried to put the matter off. When he answered Wolfgang on the 25th of June, he excused his delay by alleging visits from many great people. But the ingenuous Archon, instead of admitting Wolfgang immediately, as he should have done were there truth in his words, observed that in the portrait of Wolfgang drawn by Schweitzer, he could not find anything but what was worthy of admittance. The collection of preserved letters of the Bund unfortunately breaks off with this June of 1764 ; yet from what is extant it is evident that a higher age to qualify for entrance was about to be set ; the standard proposed was sixteen. By such a new standard of age a cunningly tacking young Archon could comfortably set aside a Goethe guilty of *Laster*. A Bund of Virtue of so dishonest practice might well be henceforth contemptible to Wolfgang. Such treatment must, of course, fill him with wrath, besides he would soon have turned his back on this hollow Pharisaic Bund, which protested that its honours were not for Birth, but for Virtue and Merit, and at the same time divided its Noble Freeman (*adlige Freien*) from its Burgher Freeman. To Wolfgang the whole business was a new bit of sad experience.

Summer found him no longer self-condemned to solitude, but able with fresh bright spirits to enter into the old cheery life in the always widening circle of friends and acquaintances. Yet with all his overflowing cheeriness and lightness he enjoyed discussing moral problems with his young friends ; very eager often was the contest with those whom he knew well. A year after he had left Frankfurt his friend Horn writes to Moors that "Goethe is a greater philosopher and moralist than ever ;" and reminds Moors what solid seeming Goethe could give to merely probable grounds of belief ; there is also a reference to his pride.

Then there was the sweet attraction of Charitas Meixner, through whom he came to know young Trapp, her cousin from Worms. That Wolfgang's life at this time was not lacking in joyousness is plain from letters of the after Leipzig time to Riese; in one he sighs for "the youths and maidens his friends,"<sup>1</sup> in another sends general greeting to the maidens of the city.<sup>2</sup> Nor did Wolfgang's adherence to friends of riper age slacken; chief among these was Olenschlager, with whom, when writing the *Elucidation of the Golden Bull*, published 1766, Wolfgang spent much time. Wolfgang's compatriot, Johann Georg Schlosser (born 1739), held to be a bright example of well applied academic study, was by April 1762 back in Frankfurt, a doctor and advocate at three and twenty; but Goethe will at this time hardly have seen anything of the serious man.

Councillor Goethe zealously urged on the legal training of Wolfgang, who felt little inclination for jurisprudence, and refrained from downright refusal to study it only because he would not shatter all his father's plans. The Councillor would sometimes describe the course of study which he had marked out for his son, to the torture of the latter, who cursed the law in secret. But Wolfgang's close study of the Latin classics gained much approval. Yet more, he longed for the most comprehensive knowledge of the wide domain of the sciences, and so he flung himself on Gesner's *Isagoge in eruditionem universam*, on Morhof's *Polyhistor literarius*, and on the *Dictionnaire historique et critique* of the brilliant sceptic and sneerer Bayle. He was much stirred by the *Briefe die neueste Literatur betreffend*, the joint production of Lessing, Nicolai, Mendelssohn and others, which had been coming out in Berlin since 1759, and by the *Bibliothek der schönen Wissenschaften*,

<sup>1</sup> Letter to Riese, 28th April 1766. *Der junge Goethe*, i. 13.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> Letter to Riese, 6th Nov. 1765. *Der junge Goethe*, i. 12 (*end of letter*).—TR.

of which Weisse had since the same year been the conductor ; these showed him the higher standpoint which criticism had won above the narrow-hearted limitation, the unintelligent dulness of Gottsched. With the older literature of Germany too he by this time had probably busied himself ; at any rate the solid excellence of Geiler of Kaisersburg was known to him.<sup>1</sup> And his first acquaintance with the old French writers, with Rabelais, Montaigne, etc., had probably been made before this period. With the living French speech he remained familiar, through the Sunday sermons of the Reformed church of Bockenheim and the occasional visits of French actors to Frankfurt.

More than all else poetry was dear to him : he felt the divine inspiration. In one of his Leipzig letters he wrote of course with exaggeration, that in his later Frankfurt period his hatred had gone out against those who, consecrating themselves for service in the sanctuary of the Law, had refused ear and voice to the soft allurements of the Muse.<sup>2</sup> Poetic forms he handled with extraordinary, almost wanton, facility. Though for the most part producing light playful verse, he could move with grace and readiness in the grave measure of the religious ode, following in the steps of Andreas Cramer and Adolf Schlegel. An instance of his skill is the *Poetische Gedanken über die Höllenfahrt Jesu Christi*, written at this period, probably at the request of his uncle Pastor Starck. Wieland's *Don Sylvio von Rosalva* was among the poems which especially delighted him. Wieland's translation of Shakespeare—begun in 1762—must have fallen in his way, yet the boy was not

<sup>1</sup> In the sixth book of *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, talking of the fault-finding of his Leipzig instructors in dialect, Goethe says : " I was to forget that I had read Geiler of Kaisersburg."—TR.

<sup>2</sup> See the verses in his letter to Riese, April 28th, 1766. *Der junge Goethe*, vol. i. page 14.—TR.



ripe for this great appearance; which indeed the translator himself did not estimate aright. Wolfgang was still under the influence of the French Drama, notwithstanding what Lessing's *Miss Sara Samson* and *Philotas* and even Klopstock's plays had done for him.

He would fain have gone to the young University of Göttingen; Heyne was a special attraction there; but his father decidedly objected, and with grave insistence decreed that his son should, like himself, spend his university days at Leipzig. In this matter also Wolfgang did not venture to chafe his father by opposition, but the firmer became his resolve to shake himself free in Leipzig from the profession which was being thrust on him: to devote himself there to classical literature—he had put his hope in Ernesti and Gellert; this resolve he kept secret from every one but his sister.

The Autumn Fair of Frankfurt, after some introductory prelude on the 5th of September 1765, began on the 9th. During the Fair or shortly before, in the very last month of Wolfgang's stay in Frankfurt, his susceptible heart, notwithstanding sad experience, was thrilling in a new love affair. We know that before he left Frankfurt he had almost finished a tragedy—*Belsazar*, and had read it aloud to a maiden, to please whom, he wrote in October from Leipzig, was his sole desire. The piece, like Klopstock's *Salomo*, on which it was modelled, was written by turns in Alexandrines and in iambic lines of five feet, and since this maiden especially liked the latter kind of verse, he writes that it shall be chosen for the as yet unwritten fifth act. "I saw no more of that best of tragedy maidens," he writes to Riese in the letter spoken of. "If you don't find out what she thinks of *Belsazar* before your departure [for Marburg University] my destiny remains in the balance."<sup>1</sup> That is, he means to leave to the decision of this

<sup>1</sup> *Der junge Goethe*, i. 10.—TR.



fair one the question whether he should try his skill further on this drama. Fear of betrayal had prevented him from meeting the girl—probably an actress—in a hoped-for last interview before his departure. Perhaps it is the same girl who is alluded to a year later in a letter to young Moors:—"I have not to thank for the affection of my maiden [his beloved at the time, Käthchen] the miserable petty *tracasseries* of your ordinary gallant. No retaining gifts are needed with her, and I look down with contempt on the toils with which I formerly bought the smiles of a W——" <sup>1</sup>

However the thought of separation from home, parents, the beloved sister who would so especially grieve, and from so many friends, may have weighed on his heart at times, the escape to freedom was a deep joy. In cultivated Leipzig he felt summoned to an existence, new, expansive, in which his spirit might unfold free wings, in which his life might mould itself as seemed good; he saw the leaden weight of law-studies drop from him; the benumbing religious exercises, to him unprofiting, would no longer shackle the fresh days and hours. When on his birthday he wrote verses in the album of his friend, Friedrich Moors, he signed himself "The Lover of the *Belles Lettres*;" in the verses he ridicules in Voltairean wise, those people who consider themselves "*die beste Welt*" (the unco' guid); one of his mockeries is a comparison of *die beste Welt* to the "heads of poets." <sup>2</sup> This wanton mood was soon to take its revenge on the self-conscious lad; he must be scared back on himself again before his nature could develop in the splendid blossom of his youthful manhood.

<sup>1</sup> *Der junge Goethe*, i. 19.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* i. 85.—TR.



BOOK II.

STUDENT YEARS

OCTOBER 1765—AUGUST 1771



## CHAPTER I.

LEIPZIG.

OCTOBER 1765—SEPTEMBER 1768.

WOLFGANG was just sixteen years and one month old, in the fresh bloom of health, full of bright hopefulness, of youth's keen pleasure in the present, when in the company of bookseller Fleischer—Olenschlager's publisher, he left the city of his childhood; to return almost three years later with richer store of knowledge and experience, but ill, scared back on himself, half despairing of life.

Leipzig Fair was going on in the early days of October, and its stir amid which our traveller entered was a delightful reminder of home. Very interesting to him was his first sight of the merchants of Eastern Europe, Russians, Poles, and, above all, the Greeks. In the first story of the *Feuerkugel*, between the *Old* and *New Neumarkt* (now the *Universitätsstrasse* and the *Neumarkt*), he hired of the aged widow Straube two pretty rooms looking out on a court which was also a thoroughfare.

The evident bloom of prosperity, the lofty buildings, the bustle of life, made a considerable impression on him; beyond the city walls the many walks, the large and beautiful gardens and pleasant places of resort, seemed pledges of a life of enjoyment. Add to this the capital dinners, by no means dear,

which he could not praise sufficiently. Setting dinners aside, however, Leipzig was a dear place to him; "groschen there were as kreutzers in Frankfurt;" yet it was possible to live at a cheap rate, and he hopes to manage the year with 300 thalers (the allowance from his father?)—ay, even with 200. During the fair, there were indeed very merry doings; "parties, theatre going, banquets, suppers, pleasure-excursions." "I cut a figure here, I can tell you," he writes to friend Riese on the 20th of October, "but, for all that, I am no dandy, and never shall be. To be industrious here will require an art." Accordingly, the object towards which the young student, with his craving for knowledge, strove was the mastery of this art.

On the 16th of October, the new Rector announced with bell-ringing, formally entered on his office; three days later Wolfgang was inscribed a member of the University. On his arrival in Leipzig, he had handed in his letter of introduction to the Professor of History, Johann Friedrich Böhme. The fair over, bookseller Fleischer departed, after having introduced Wolfgang to many of his acquaintance; and now only did Wolfgang venture to tell Böhme that he desired to study classical antiquity, instead of jurisprudence; a desire which Böhme seriously disapproved, and which he certainly would not gratify without Councillor Goethe's consent. Now for the first time arose before the lad's mental vision a formidable barrier of objections, hitherto overlooked. The thought of his father, violent in anger at such disobedience, of his mother's and his sister's suffering, while that anger lasted, frightened him; and this fear of proceeding to extremity, this feeling of duty towards those near and dear to him, proved stronger than his heart's desire. Accordingly, he decided to begin with the first lectures on Law, on Institutes, and the History of Law; to which were added, with Professor Winckler, the unavoidable *collegium philosophicum et mathematicum* on the system of Wolff;



with Böhme himself lectures on History and an introduction to Public Law. Besides, Böhme permitted attendance at Ernesti's lectures on Cicero *De Oratore* and Gellert's based on Stockhausen's *Sketch of a Select Library*; nor did he object to Wolfgang's interest in Gellert's "Exercises in German and Latin composition, for the cultivation of understanding and style." At first, the hot-blooded youth was a diligent hearer, though in the History and Law lectures there was hardly anything which he did not know—a new reason for hating his law studies; and though he wearied of the unrealities of the metaphysics and logic, while in Ernesti's lectures, really instructive as they were, he did not find what he hoped. There was depression too, in Gellert's dry treatment of the History of Literature; in his narrow-souled discouragement of poetic efforts, of fresh spontaneous emotion; in his painful correcting of mistakes without any helpful indications, without any spiritual elevation; in his altogether schoolmaster-like attitude, his anxious insistence on good handwriting, his interspersing of platitudes on moral and religious subjects. Once too, Wolfgang attended a lecture of the much abused Gottsched, and made merry over the lecturer in wanton verses addressed to Riese.

On the other hand, the excellently conducted theatre of Heinrich Gottfried Koch gave him much delight. At this almost immediately he saw with great satisfaction Weisse's Comedy *Die Poeten nach der Mode*, in which the father desires his daughter to marry the suitor Dunkel, who pours out his soul in turgid hexameters; while the mother favours the rival Reimreich, who speaks in tame rhyming verses. He saw with much pleasure too *Der poetische Dorfjunker*, by Frau Gottsched, after Destouches, a play which amusingly contrasts with more modern court manners the antiquated mode of life of the country aristocracy. Most excellent among the actors was Brückner, next to him was Frau Starke; the "first sweet-

heart" (*erste Liebhaberin*), Fräulein Steinbrecher, was not so good. Theatre-going had the more charm for Wolfgang since he had at last set to work writing drama, was busy finishing *Belsazar*, while many other subjects hovered before him. The "Great Concerts" conducted by Johann Adam Hiller, should be mentioned here as another powerful attraction of those days.<sup>1</sup>

He spent many evenings in Frau Böhme's society. The refined Leipzig lady used with tender courtesy to point out to him his incorrect pronunciation, and the many irregularities which she perceived in the picturesque powerful speech of his Frankfurt home. Improving as this might be, it was rendered a little hard to bear by the almost invariable presence of another lady, her companion, by no means as merciful. And Frau Böhme spoiled all his pleasure in the modern poets, favourite passages from which were so familiar to his lips. Nor did he himself fare better when he repeated some lines of his own, without letting her know whose they were. Unfortunately he had no friend to tell all his worries to; no one could be less fit for his confidences than his poor weak-eyed fellow-lodger, the theologian Limprecht, an object of charity to Frau Straube. Though they were good friends, for Goethe pitied the poor fellow, sympathising in his lot, and lightening it with generous gifts, there was in the sufferer no *sense* for the joys and pains of the other.

The dinner-table at the house of the Professor of Medicine, Christian Gottlieb Ludwig, was frequented mostly by medical students, who, like their brethren in all times and places, talked of little but Medicine and Natural Science. So the

<sup>1</sup> The Great Concert (*Das Grosse Concert*) had been founded so far back as 1743. The guidance of it was undertaken by Hiller in 1763. There were twenty-four concerts every winter. See Keil's *Corona Schröter*.—TR.

only friendship formed there was with the sometime tutor in Ludwig's family, the excellent Humanist Morus, a Master of Arts, thirteen years older indeed than Goethe, a gentle and amiable presence. Goethe's desire for knowledge of classical antiquity led to frequent intercourse with this well-stored mind. Morus touched the weaknesses of the much-prized modern poets with a criticism keener than Frau Böhme's. And though this criticism failed, as Gellert's silence had failed, to take away Goethe's pleasure in these writers, it did make some change in his practice; he reviewed his own poems with more severe judgment.

Among the works which at this time specially interested him may be noted here the *Komische Erzählungen* of Wieland.

His ardour for dramatic composition had as the winter advanced grown thoroughly damped by seeing so many pieces so different from his win on the Leipzig stage a favour which he could not hope for his own efforts. But though thus limited for a time as to original composition, he did not slacken in his endeavour to gain thorough insight into the principles of correct taste, inadequate as were the sources within his reach. Perhaps at this time he read Aristotle's *Poetics* in the translation of Curtius (1753) with the many annotations and dissertations of the translator: one dissertation was *Concerning the Nature and True Conception of the Poetic Art*—(*von dem Wesen und wahren Begriff der Dichtkunst*). In May 1797, after he had sent this book to Schiller, he wrote that he had read it thirty years before, but had quite failed to understand it.

That already mentioned cooling down of his ardour for authorship had made considerable advance even by January 1766, when a letter from home arrived, commissioning him to produce a festal poem for the marriage, to take place on the 17th of February, of his uncle the Advocate Textor. All real

delight in his theme being absent, here was a delicious opportunity for a show-off piece (*ein Paradestück*), and by bringing in all Olympus he delivered a piece of writing which could hold its own beside the other manufactured goods of the day. Not only was there loud applause at home, he even thought well of the performance himself. In letters to his own home he could not, alas! pour himself forth in confidences. Very glad he would have been to open his heart to his sister, his chief correspondent, but all they wrote was seen by their father; who, indeed, made his daughter a kind of speaking tube for giving lessons, so that there was a *teaching* air about her letters, and hardly a word in them really from the heart. So, too, Wolfgang's letters were mostly on matters of pedagogy, or halted at mere superficial things. The only use of this correspondence was, that his handwriting, injured by scribbling hurried notes of lectures, gradually improved under the exhortations from home, which fell in with Gellert's on the same subject.

As the lectures gave him less and less satisfaction—the *collegium philosophicum* had been shipwrecked about Shrove Tide by the appearance of hot pancakes at the same time of day with it—as his belief in his own poetry faded; as he more and more bitterly felt the want of a friend, and of the delight of mutual confidences; his mood became a very dark one; and his endeavours to win cheerfulness in the open face of nature proved unavailing. It was at this period that he cut his initials (J.W.G.) on a linden. Perhaps before the end of the first half-year (1765) he burnt in the kitchen fire nearly all he had written,—outlines, or actual beginnings, or completed works. In his gloom he did not write even to his friends. He may have felt religious stirrings at this time; he withheld himself, however, from all church intercourse. Towards the middle of April (Easter Sunday in 1766 fell on the

30th of March) his merry friend Horn made his appearance ; he too, was going to begin three years of law study. He thought Wolfgang strangely altered, could make nothing of the “dreamer” (*Phantast*).

A vivid picture of his state at this time is given in a reply to Riese, dated April 28th, 1766. His single pleasure, he writes, is “to lie amid the bushes by the brook” thinking about those who are dear to him, but even at such moments the longing for friendly social life does not cease to be importunate. “I sigh for my friends and my maidens, and when I feel that I sigh in vain”—here follows in four rhyming stanzas the description of an imagined storm which rages over brook and thicket, driving him to “mourn in solitude within lonely walls.” Immediately after this he says:—“But how merry I am, quite merry. Horn’s coming has done away with a great part of my melancholy. He is surprised at the change he sees in me.” Then he adds in a rhyming strophe, that Horn in vain sought a reason for this change, nor could he himself give any. Then in forty lines of five-foot iambics,—the beloved dramatic verse—he launches forth in a very strained description of his feelings; his pride is broken; when he first saw what the fame of great men really is, and how great must be the strivings which attain to it, it became clear to him—here there is an extremely forced metaphor—that he was quite without the poet’s inspiration. Farther on, he advises his friend to put their names down for more lectures; Horn attends five lectures, he himself six! Lastly, he warns his friend against “academic morals.” The lectures which he attended just then were:—his law lectures; History of the German Empire with Böhme; Batteux’ book on Poetry and the *Belles-lettres* with Gellert; Exercise in Style with Clodius—this on Gellert’s recommendation; finally, Physics with Winckler; for the living presence of Nature had already



enthralled him, and there, rather than in gray metaphysical systems, he sought instruction.

About this time word came from home that Johann Georg Schlosser having been summoned to attend Duke Friedrich Eugen of Württemberg at Treptow, as private secretary, would take Leipzig on his way, and stop there for a while. Perhaps Wolfgang's melancholy had betrayed itself in his letters, and his father had asked Schlosser to look after him. Schlosser stopped with the wine-seller Schönkopf on the *Brühl*—where it is now No. 79. (Frau Schönkopf was from Frankfurt-am-Main, and during the fairs, one of which began on the 28th of April, their guests were mostly Frankfurt folk.) Goethe, who felt a passionate longing to tell everything to this solid many-sided man, stayed close by him always, joining Schönkopf's *table d'hôte* for his sake. The lad's fullest confidence was awakened by the kindness of the serious Schlosser, in whom high self-respect was accompanied by a restless pursuit of culture, with austerity on that bulging forehead intervening between the black hair and black eyebrows; and he revealed all his melancholy soul, wavering hither and thither, with no sure support or stay. Then the elder friend spoke encouragement, and roused him from his dreams to serious reflection and manful composure of soul.

Schlosser showed poems and themes of his own composition in several modern languages to Goethe, who felt a desire to make like efforts. After Schlosser's departure they became correspondents, and, if *Dichtung und Wahrheit* be correct, Goethe used to send his friend poems in German, French, Italian, and English, on the subjects they had often talked about.

His letters home, too, were frequently in French or English; it is not improbable that his sister wrote in the former language. Still preserved is a letter in French, dated



June 2d, 1766, from Wolfgang to his friend Trapp in Worms, terminating with thirty-nine Alexandrines. Trapp had complained of Wolfgang's silence through a friend who was coming to Leipzig, and had promised news of Charitas Meixner as a reward for a letter. Wolfgang complains of his friend Müller, who is always talking about the train of lovers of Charitas; still Wolfgang is not frightened; he will try to live worthy of his beloved; love alone shall be his guide to the summit of fortune:—

“ Au sommet du bonheur par lui je vais monter.  
Au sommet de la science monté par l'industrie,  
Je réviens, cher ami, pour revoir ma patrie,  
Et viens voir en dépit de tout altier censeur,  
Si elle est en état d'achever mon bonheur.”

Lastly, he presses for fuller news of Charitas.

Probably French gallantry had more part in this than real passion; another magnet had begun to draw his soul. The cure begun by Schlosser was continued in the happiest way by the family and guests of the little wine-shop; for he liked his company there so much that he still went there after his friend's departure. The most powerful charm was in the daughter of the house, Anna Katharina, three years his senior; he was at this period always attracted to girls somewhat older than himself. She was called Kätchen; in Goethe's narrative she is always Annette or Aennchen. We give here her portrait taken just at this time. Horn describes her to his friend Moors as a well-grown though not tall girl, with a round, friendly, if not remarkably beautiful face, and an open gentle winning manner; as having much frank simplicity of nature without coquetry, and a pretty intelligence though she has not had the best education. This pretty, unaffected girl, with her high spirits, her saucy fun, and her affectionate kindliness, was very delightful to Wolfgang, who had now forgotten his melancholy and looked forth hopefully

on the world. So delightful was her presence that the Schönpkopf's house became a second home to him; he soon



FIG. 7. Anna Katharina Schönpkopf. From *Goethe's Briefe an Leipziger Freunde*. }

felt like one of the little family, to whom indeed there was no dearer guest than the openhearted Wolfgang.

Two of his table companions here were of important influence on his culture. Johann Gottlieb Pfeil, seventeen years his senior, was the tutor of Freiherr von Friesen, who had been studying in Leipzig since 1763; they both dined at Schönpkopf's. Pfeil had become well known as early as 1755

by his anonymously published *Geschichte des Grafen P——*, a counterpart to Gellert's novel *Leben der schwedischen Gräfin von G——*; by his *Versuche in moralischen Erzählungen*; and by his domestic tragedy *Lucie Woodwill*. Pfeil, who was completing his law studies, tried to influence his young friend's literary judgment; he specially urged the necessity of weighty matter and concise treatment. Six years older than Goethe, Christian Gottfried Hermann, son of the Court Preacher at Dresden, was another important friend. Since 1763 he had been a zealous student of law; he was one of the most diligent and steady of the Academic citizens. Wolfgang put thorough trust in this good friend with his calm precision and earnestness; qualities which did not exclude a disposition to pleasant merriment. Hermann's importance was the greater in that he cared a great deal for Art, and had a special talent for sketching from nature: he thus roused afresh Wolfgang's fondness for drawing.

Another who took much interest in him was the Naumburger, Gottlob Friedrich Krebel, Receiver-General of the Excise: twenty years older than he; engaged just then on a *Book of Titles with Special Reference to the Electorate of Saxony*; a man thoroughly familiar with the genealogy, geography, and topography, not only of Germany, but of foreign countries. Always merry, with a bright look in his clear, somewhat prominent eyes, this big portly man delighted in railing at Wolfgang after the manner of Falstaff, in rousing him to wit-combats.

In the evenings there were many other guests at Schönpkopf's; among them Ernst Wolfgang Behrisch, tutor of a Count von Lindenau, a thin, well-built man eleven years older than Wolfgang, with a long nose, rugged features, but fine manners. It was very natural that Wolfgang and Behrisch should become intimate. Each was interesting to the other;

the youth, scintillating intellect, free and mobile as quicksilver, compelled the attention of the original being, beneath whose oddities there was a genuinely cultivated mind and a good heart. Even Gellert had a very high opinion of Behrisch. For Goethe this new friend was of the greatest importance, because, although much of his time fled in foolish jestings and nothings, he remained a faithful friend and a severe critic. It is true that he sometimes ridiculed the good; but then there was a spirited opposition which wrought for culture, and through which real weaknesses were the more irrevocably damned. Thus our youth had again found his way into a circle of friends older than himself, by whose rich store of experience he profited, while through the great differences of their characters his knowledge of men was widened.

In order to prevent word of his love for the host's daughter from going to Frankfurt, he sought strange means to veil it from common regard. He pretended to be enamoured of a certain young lady, to whom he paid court in the most ostentatious way. Probably with this affair is connected that change of wardrobe for which *Dichtung und Wahrheit* gives another cause. "He is with his pride a dandy too," writes Horn to Moors on the 12th of August 1766; "and all his clothes, fine as they are, are in such foolish taste as to render him conspicuous in the whole University. . . . His sole study is to please his lady-love and himself. In whatever company he may be he makes himself ridiculous, rather than agreeable. Just because the lady admires it he has put on such airs and graces that one can't help laughing outright. . . . She is a most insipid being. Her *mine coquette avec un air hautain* is all she has to bewitch Goethe with." Wolfgang quietly put up with all the ridicule, if only he might keep curious eyes off his real love affair. When Jerusalem, son of the celebrated preacher of Osnabrück, calls Goethe a coxcomb (*Geck*) it is perhaps

because in Jerusalem's two years of study at Leipzig (Easter 1765-1767), that period by which he remembered Goethe was the strange one here described ; but in any case the lad's sparkling, versatile, or, as Herder wrote to Caroline Flachsland in 1772, *sparrow-like* nature, with such a delight in mad escapades, could hardly have commended itself to the grave Jerusalem who was a few years his senior. It needed a more penetrating vision to recognise beneath that wild or foolish exterior the earnestness of purpose within, the depth and force of passion.

Of his attendance at lectures in the summer half-year of 1766 we know little. He made Böhme very angry by sketching on the margin of his note-book the authorities quoted in the law lectures, each with the oddest of periwigs ; the students sitting near him of course laughed. As for Gellert, it was only too plain that he knew nothing of the poetry which flows of itself from a full heart and genuine feeling ; and his silence regarding all modern poets was felt as an injustice. That poem written by Goethe in January 1766 for his uncle's marriage was later on submitted to Clodius, and underwent sharp criticism at his hands ; the excessive use of the personages of mythology for such a petty human aim was one of the relics of a very pedantic age, etc. His mercilessness, which would allow no atom of merit to the poem, embittered Goethe the more because it was quite easy for people to find out whose was the poor piece of journeyman work they were laughing at.

In the spring of 1766 was published the *Laokoon* of Lessing, an important event to one so anxious for light as Goethe. Painting and poetry, hitherto supposed to be dominated by the same laws, now had their boundaries exactly determined ; no doubt of their essential difference was henceforth possible. Probably about this time, and perhaps at Schlosser's instigation, he read William Dodd's *The Beauties of Shakespeare Selected*,



a second edition of which had appeared in 1757. In these beautiful separate passages untranslated he felt far more than in Wieland's German the spiritual presence of the great poet, whom henceforth he reckoned among his veritable Masters.

All friends of the stage at this time hailed with delight the building of the new Leipzig theatre; for the erection of the framework on July 18th, 1766, the Carpenter's Speech (*Zimmermannsspruch*) was written by the young poet Michaelis—born at the close of 1746. Goethe must have come in contact with him, for Michaelis, beside lectures in medicine, attended those of Gellert and of Ernesti, and in this same year published a volume of poems.

At this period Goethe became intimate with the two sons of the printer Breitkopf: Bernhard Theodor, some months older than he, and Christoph Gottlob, born September 1750, wonderfully good and true-hearted. Their elder sister, Sophie Constanze, was in perfect youthful bloom. It was in this summer (1766) that the Breitkopfs' new house the *Silver Bear*, facing their old one the *Golden Bear*, was completed. Probably Fleischer, before his departure, had introduced Goethe to the Breitkopfs, as he had to those other friends, the bookseller Reich, and Reich's partner in business, Fräulein Weidmann.

The dissimulation of his love-affair grew by degrees unendurable. And when his friend Moors earnestly questioned him about the matter, even threatening withdrawal of friendship, Goethe confided the secret to Horn, whom he asked to write to Moors what he found it hard to write himself. Horn's letter, dated October 3, 1766, explains how Goethe had pretended to be in love with that coquette, and cut a dash only that he might unsuspected from time to time see and speak with his real beloved,—a girl beneath him in rank: Horn has often accompanied him on his visits to her.—“Since then he has honoured me with a more intimate con-



fidence—has discovered to me the state of his affairs, showing that he does not spend as much as might be thought. He is more of a philosopher and moralist than ever; and innocent as his love is, condemns it. . . . I pity him and his good heart, and it is really a sad affair—to love without hope the best and dearest of girls. And suppose she loves him in return—why, it can only make him the more wretched.”

But two days earlier, Goethe—thinking that Horn had already fulfilled his engagement—had himself addressed Moors, and sought to justify to this twin-friend all his course of conduct:—“What is rank? An idle colouring which men have invented to daub on people who do not deserve it. And in the eyes of a thinking man wealth is just as miserable a pre-eminence. Here am I, who love a maiden without rank and without fortune; and now, for the first time, I feel the happiness which true love gives. . . . The good heart of my S—— (Schönkopf) is a pledge that she will not give me up until Duty and Necessity command us to separate. If you knew this good maiden you would pardon me my follies since I love her. Ay, she deserves the best happiness, which indeed I wish her, without any hope of ever myself being able to contribute to it.” Unable to endure this course of dissimulation any longer, he thus stood forth as Kätchen’s open lover, and let her ladyship speed. Then he abandoned himself to the delicious passion, and thought no more of what the end might be. There was a sort of boyish fantastic in this love; he despised the world’s prejudices, and yet had not courage to defy them. On the same day (October 1, 1766) he wrote to Trapp again in French, but without verses. He has heard with delight how Charitas had wished to possess his letter of four months ago, with its declaration of ardent love for her. Trapp may give her the letter only on condition that she will keep it as a frequent reminder of an unhappy lover who loves

her without hope ; who wishes her the happiest life, without any prospect of himself being able to contribute to her happiness.<sup>1</sup> Thus this affair was brought to a conclusion with be-  
seeming gallantry. Käthchen's power was now undisputed. This autumn he cut her initials above his own on his linden.

In the beginning of October (1766) the old theatre was closed, and the new one opened with Johann Elias Schlegel's *Hermann*. On the drop scene—painted by Oeser, Director of the Academy of Drawing—you saw the porch of the Temple of Truth, in which stood statues of the ancient dramatists, and of some French and German followers ; but in the midst, straight towards the temple, moved a man in a loose garment—a solitary figure—to represent Shakespeare. The addresses at the closing of the old theatre and the opening of the new were written by Clodius in ample Alexandrines. Though the Professor had attacked the pompous mythological adornment of Wolfgang's Birthday Ode, here—caught from Ramler—was manifest the no less pedantic mania for the full sound of the dignified Greek and Latin words. Goethe, in whom the anger roused by Clodius's mercilessness was still awake, did not let the occasion slip. He made an irresistibly ludicrous parody by bringing together in a poetic address to the confectioner Händel<sup>2</sup> the foreign words used by Clodius. He wrote this address in pencil on the wall of the house in Händel's Cake Garden at the hamlet Reudnitz. No less was the spirit of mockery stirred within him later on by Clodius's play, *Medon oder die Rache des Weisen*. On the evening of the very day of its representation, he threw off at Schölkopf's a Harlequin's Prologue, parodying the essential inanity of the play ; and friend Horn immediately recited this prologue to the delight of all.

They had a merry time of it this winter (1766-7) in Schön-

<sup>1</sup> *Der junge Goethe*, i. 17, 18.—Tr.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* i. 86.—Tr.

kopf's house, where the happiness of loving unlocked Wolfgang's soul. Sunday was an especially bright day, when a larger company than usual regularly assembled to drink punch together. Wolfgang used to sing with Käthchen from the collection of songs which Zachariä wrote and set to music, while Käthchen's younger brother accompanied on the piano. Occasionally other cultivated musicians played, and a Fräulein Obermann, from the opposite side of the street, who was training to be a concert singer, would add to the pleasure of the evening with her voice. Already, too, they had got so far as little dramatic representations; we hear, for instance, how in Krüger's *Herzog Michel*, Goethe won great applause in the part of the vassal who dreams of good fortune.

At the Breitkopfs' also there were frequent joyous evenings. Wolfgang, who had been very helpful during the house-changing, grew in intimacy with them all. Musical and dramatic performances, especially acting proverbs, at which Wolfgang was exceedingly good; parlour-games and pranks of all kinds made the time bright and delightful. How much happier he felt than when he had had to listen to Frau Böhme's corrections. That good and kind lady was dangerously ill, and could see no one; she died in February 1767.

The Concerts and the theatre continued to be sources of a manifold delightful culture; at the theatre he saw many merry operettas (*Singspiele*). At the concerts one much admired figure was the young Corona Schröter, then just sixteen,<sup>1</sup> who ruled all hearts, especially young hearts, by her beauty and her impassioned acting. There, too, Fräulein Schmebling, who was but eighteen, earned fame by her extraordinarily full, pure, powerful voice. Perhaps already Goethe

<sup>1</sup> She was born January 14, 1751. She had begun singing in the Great Concerts in 1765, when she was but fourteen! See Robert Keil, *Corona Schröter*, pp. 10 and 33.—Tr.

had begun to write, at the request of Corona's adorers, little poems in which he could speak his own emotion ; at Leipzig it was then the custom to scatter such offerings in honour of actresses and *prima donnas*.

Beside lectures prescribed and necessary, he attended others prompted by his own desire for knowledge. Most important, because of their bearing on his soul's strong desire after a fixed central point in art, were the lessons in drawing with Oeser. This master, caring more for the significant than the beautiful, a sworn foe to ornament, tried not to make painters of his pupils ; but to cultivate eye, intelligence, and taste, to a capacity for understanding and enjoying works of art. What the great Winckelmann had learned from Oeser—that the ideal is to be found in simplicity and repose ; that beauty in art depends on delicate sensibility and a purified taste, rather than on deep reflection—this Wolfgang heard from the same teacher, who was now with glad enthusiasm watching the movements of his great pupil in Rome. Oeser listened with willing ear to all Wolfgang's often curious thoughts. "What is there that I do not owe to you !" writes Wolfgang, soon after his return to Frankfurt.<sup>1</sup> "Any feeling I have for the beautiful, any knowledge, any judgment, all, I have through you. What a certain, what a luminous truth is now your saying that for the development of the budding philosopher or budding poet the studio of the great artist is a far better place than the lecture-room of the thinker or critic. Precept does much, but encouragement (*Aufmunterung*) does everything. Who but you among all my instructors has thought me worthy of encouragement ? Neither unmixed praise nor unmixed blame, than either of which nothing can be more injurious to faculty. Encouragement after blame is sun after rain—a rich increase. Ay, Herr Professor, had you not aided my devotion

<sup>1</sup> *Der junge Goethe*, i. 35.—TR.

to the Muses, I should have despaired." So completely was Oeser's teaching the central point of Goethe's art-culture.

Wolfgang, alas ! often clouded the happiness of his love by jealous grumbling ; for the host's pretty daughter had to show a friendly face to many besides himself ; and, indeed, he had no exclusive rights, for he was unable to propose marriage to her. One day, when he came to his linden, he was much moved by seeing that the sap had flowed over his initials from the place where hers were cut ; for this brought to his mind with sudden force the tears which his rudeness, dear as she was to him, had often made her shed. Immediately he hastened to beg her forgiveness. Also he felt impelled to put this incident in an idyll which he never could read without emotion.

On the Wednesday after Easter, April 22, 1767, the gifted Caroline Schulze, accompanied by her brother, a well-known ballet-dancer, made her appearance in the ballet, *Das Leben der Bauern*. She took her benefit as Julie in Weisse's *Romeo and Julie*, which was acted for the first time on the 6th of May. Oeser, who had the decorations in charge, painted her as she appeared in this part. When a very old man Goethe remembered her brilliant performance. He never missed seeing her ; and he extolled her acting in verse, in which he entreated her to condescend no more to the ballet.

About Easter the poet Zachariä, Professor of Poetry *am Carolinum* at Brunswick, came to Leipzig for a fortnight ; he dined at Schönkopf's, which his brother, a reserved silent man, regularly frequented. The poet, now forty years old, might be proud of the hospitable reception which the company at the *table d'hôte* gave him. The ode which Wolfgang addressed to this "*Liebling der Muse*," soon after his departure, shows how close they had been drawn together. The yearning complaint of this ode has an extremely forced



affected note, and the Greek Mythology is quite unnecessarily summoned to aid, so Clodius might, had he chosen, have paid out the parodist in his own coin. Oeser's Simplicity and Repose is the last thing to be found in it. Goethe's poetry had just then arrived at the midmost stage of a process of fermentation ; and here he unfortunately feels inspired to the height of the antique Ode, without, however, possessing the mastery of the antique form. When, on the 6th of May, he was asked to write a verse in a friend's album, he pressed into his service a little poem by Gleim, in which the happiest of moods finds utterance. The slight changes introduced are very significant ; Gleim's maiden is "*schön zum Küssen* ;" Wolfgang's is "*willig ihn zu Küssen*," and instead of *one* friend there are many.

About this time appeared Lessing's *Minna von Barnhelm*, the first National Comedy which Germany possessed ; sure, too, to be specially effective in Leipzig, in that it, as it were, puts on the stage the loveableness of the Saxon ladies. To Wolfgang there must have been special interest in the light thrown on his old hero the King of Prussia, not such a hero to him now as formerly. About this time he got into a scrape without being really to blame. Friend Horn, by adding some lines of his own to the verses (the Händel verses) written to ridicule Clodius's theatre-speeches, had made them refer to the *Medon* ; and because, among his intimate friends, he did not, for his own part in them, get all the praise he desired he was so unwise as to make them rather widely known ; soon many copies of them were about. Clodius and his by no means unimportant party were deeply hurt. It was asked who the author was, and it was not hard to find out Wolfgang, about whose eccentric behaviour there were many stories. Not content with thinking him a malicious mocker, they painted him an immoral abandoned being like Günther, who,



almost half a century ago, had died in the extremest wretchedness, before he had reached his twenty-eighth birthday. Word of the attack on Clodius reached Dresden too, where the father of young Count Lindenau heard that this wicked Goethe was the nearest friend of Behrisch; that the two went about together late at night; and even that his son in their company had been to a certain garden, which belonged to girls who were better than their reputation. The Count immediately dismissed the unprincipled tutor. Behrisch indeed, through Gellert's agency, was engaged as tutor to the Hereditary Prince of Dessau; but Goethe's loss of a very winning sympathetic friend remained the same. When Clodius soon after published his *Medon* in the second part of *Versuche aus der Literatur und der Moral*, he observed that, should this win the approval of other men of worth;—"he would think little about the attacks of those who were beneath criticism." This was the "*Wise Man's Revenge*" (*Die Rache des Weisen*) on the pert student from Frankfurt.

In this summer (1767) we note a growth of closer acquaintance with Oeser's daughter Friederike Elizabeth, who was a year older than Goethe. During the winter he can hardly have seen anything of her, since he did not know Oeser well enough to be invited to those evening assemblies; at which, among others, the highly valued poet Christian Felix Weisse;<sup>1</sup> his friend Christian Garve; the Academic professor of languages, Huber; the merchant Kreuchauß, a collector of objects of art, were frequent guests. Oeser, who delighted in our brilliant youth, would often walk with him round the city from gate to gate, and in summer invited him to Dölitz, a country residence. Here Goethe often met a joyous circle of friends; but the chief attraction was the

<sup>1</sup> Weisse held the post of Circle Tax-Collector (*Kreissteuereinnnehmer*)

daughter of the house ; not beautiful—for small-pox had left its traces,—but cultivated, intellectual, full of roguish wit, cheery and kindly. She felt much interested by his spark-



*Lindbach, Oeser. 24. Gänger zum Oeser.*

FIG. 8. After a picture by Johann Heinrich Tischbein.

ling intelligence ; by the independence and teachableness in such rare union. We give here her likeness and that of her sister, the wife of the engraver Geyser. There were often lively wit-combats. Beside Dölitz, another frequent place of call for Wolfgang was Sellerhausen, the summer residence of Reich, situated about a league outside Leipzig. An alley between trees on the shady bank of the Rietschke towards Reudnitz was long called the "Poet's Walk ;" at the stone table, on a garden eminence, it is said that Wolfgang often sat.

There was all this time no lack of the rash deeds born of a mettlesome humour ; partly was our young student in them compliant to the wishes of friends ; partly did he in adventure find a spice to life. Only incidentally do we hear of a slight wound in the arm in a duel with a theological student, the Livonian Bergmann, who came to the University in Easter 1767. The story has it that Wolfgang brought about this duel by deliberate provocation of the freshman (*Fuchs*). Merry tricks of mystification were much in vogue. Poor Horn was a special object of these tricks ; he began to be called the *Pegauer*—Pegau is the Saxon Abode of Fools.

Wolfgang must have written a good deal in that spring and summer of 1767 ; Behrisch's beautiful transcript of his poems could have contained no work earlier than the burning already spoken of. Probably the volume had for its chief contents the poems called forth by the sight of the engravings and drawings in Leipzig collections ; poems, some of which, we learn from Goethe himself, describe the situations preceding or following those represented in the pictures ; some are songs which one might suppose sung by the persons depicted.

That departure of Behrisch at the close of Goethe's second summer Semester (1767) left a great gap in his life. At the end of August, or the beginning of September, he hurried to Dresden, for he yearned to refresh heart and spirit before the masterworks of the Picture Gallery ; and this would be closed by the end of September. From that peculiar belief of his, that every important resolve if communicated to others fails to be carried out, he told no one of the journey he proposed. Because he had inherited his father's dislike of inns—still more, probably, because he wished to remain quite unknown in Dresden—he oddly enough boarded with a shoemaker in the suburbs—a cousin of Limprecht. This shoemaker's character was known to him through the man's letters to

Limprecht. The visit to Dresden was almost exclusively devoted to the Gallery. His own preference led him to the Dutch masters, whose works were the chief treasures of the collections of Leipzig and Frankfurt. Not denying the merits of the Italians (he has just read of D'Argenville's *Lives of the Painters* the first part, which treats of the Italians), and having some real joy in their august magnificence, he nevertheless finds them far removed from his experience of life up to the present ; while in the Dutch he can admire the triumph of Art above a Nature with which he is familiar. So did the spirit of the Netherlanders transfuse itself in him that, on leaving the Gallery, he used to see everyday scenes through the eyes of an Ostade, a Schalken.

After his return his life was soon drawn back into the old round, in which the absence of Behrisch was bitterly regretted. Just at the beginning of his third student year (October 1767) he wrote—in free, unrhymed stanzas of four lines—three odes to Behrisch, in which, indeed, there is mastery of language and evidence of vivid imagination, but which are forced and extravagant to obscurity. They complain how calumny prevails in Leipzig—weaving round the good man a foul garment of ill report, which makes him shunned, and compels him to seek another abode. Let Behrisch burst the flower-chains of friendship which would keep him at Goethe's side ; let no thought of the fellow-prisoner stay the footsteps of him who can fly. His own last year at Leipzig has begun ; it will pass rapidly, and then—freedom ! This fantastic gloom did not last long ; there was so much to delight him—chief of all, his love, to which he gave himself without concern for the future.

The lectures of his professor of law were become a merely secondary matter ; more than from them, or indeed from his own industry, he learned from his companions of the *table*



*d'hôte*. Of these it may be mentioned that Hermann in this year graduated, and became *Supernumerarassessor* in the Supreme Court of Justice; and that Pfeil, the year after, obtained the Doctor's degree. Art, concerts, and the theatre, absorbed Wolfgang more and more. Beside keeping up his regular lessons with Oeser, he studied the history of Art; and grew, as time went by, more frequent in his visits to the Leipzig collections, all the owners being very friendly to him. His passion for reading at the book-market was unappeasable. Weisse's *Neue Bibliothek der schönen Wissenschaften und freien Künste* was especially the order of the day, but the magazines of Nicolai, Klotz,<sup>1</sup> and others, were also eagerly devoured. Then there were numerous pamphlets. Still, he writes from Frankfurt in the following year, clings to him the reading of little old books (*Schartekchenlesen*), which in Leipzig often passes for erudition.<sup>2</sup> It is not wonderful that the concerts attracted him, when two such singers as Gertrude Elizabeth Schmehling and Corona Schröter could be heard in the same piece. Four lines addressed to Corona on her performance in Hasse's oratorio, *Santa Elena al Calvario*, in December 1767, have been preserved.<sup>3</sup> At the theatre he was greatly delighted by Fräulein Schulze in *Minna von*

<sup>1</sup> Nicolai's magazine at this time was the *Allgemeine deutsche Bibliothek*, which was started 1765. The *Literaturbriefe* already mentioned (see p. 62), ceased to appear in 1765. Professor Christian Adolf Klotz (1738-1771) edited the *Deutsche Bibliothek der schönen Wissenschaften*, published at Halle.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> Goethe to Friederike Oeser, 13th February 1769. The remark here quoted is near the end of this long letter. See *Der junge Goethe*, i. 55.—TR.

<sup>3</sup> “Unwiderstehlich muss die Schöne uns entzücken,  
Die frommer Andacht Reize schmücken;  
Wenn jemand diesen Satz durch Zweifeln noch entehrt,  
So hat er dich niemals als Helena gehört.”

*Der junge Goethe*, i. 92.—TR.

*Barnhelm* (November 18, 1767). The play was received with the warmest applause, and was represented six times afterwards before the close of the year. On February 24, 1768, Fräulein Schulze played for the last time in Leipzig. Goethe was unable to take part in the festival celebrating her departure, in which Oeser and Weisse were active, and where the still hostile Clodius handed her a poem; but he was probably one of those students whose parting verses the actress preserved in a large volume all her life.

The amateur theatre under "*Directeur* Schönpkopf" flourished this winter (1767-8) in especial vigour. We hear of a brilliant representation of *Minna*, in which Corona Schröter played the heroine, Dr. Johann Jakob Engel, afterwards Chief Director of the Theatre of Berlin (he was ten years older than Goethe) played Tellheim; Goethe was the sergeant Werner; Constanze Breilkopf was Franziska, and Horn was the servant Just. And in a representation of Diderot's *Hausvater* (*Père de Famille*) Engel was one of the company. Goethe was particularly good in comic parts, his best was "the lover Don Sassafras" (?) And his own dramatic faculty was stimulated by all these theatre-doings; as usual, that which deeply interested him called forth his creative power. He wrote the pastoral drama *Die Laune des Verliebten*, as a poetic atonement to Käthchen for the rudenesses of his jealousy; for the shepherd Eridon is an image of his own behaviour, while Horn and his maiden are perhaps shadowed forth in the happy pair of lovers. To this winter also falls *Die Mitschuldigen*, which had at first only one act. In this play one cannot but feel the influence of Lessing's *Minna*, especially in the character of the Host; Goethe is still, however, true to the Alexandrine, since verse had a certain artistic restraining power which he missed in prose. The play shows how deep Goethe had seen into the ills of society; but the mild judgment of sin implied in its



winding up is rather of the art of the writer of comedy than a reflection of the young Wolfgang's real views. According to *Dichtung und Wahrheit* (Bk. vii.) he at this time sketched and began several other plays, to ease his mind of the gloomy reflections to which he was compelled at sight of the sins undermining family life around him ; but he let these beginnings drop, because in each the complication became painful and threatened a tragic end.

In the New Year (1768), the course of Wolfgang's love affair took a very distressing, though a very natural turn. He had brought to Schölkopf's an advocate, Johann Gottfried Kanne, his senior by four years, by birth a Saxon. After having suffered so much from Wolfgang's jealousy, and being unable to see in his love-making anything except a trifling, which his return to Frankfurt would soon bring to a close, Käthchen could not withstand the *bonâ fide* wooing of the newcomer, and Wolfgang had soon to acknowledge that her love for Kanne was real and deep. We know that Kanne as well as Horn lodged with the Schölkopfs — at any rate a little later. Wolfgang grew immeasurably wretched when he found that the girl, though still very fond of him, had really given her heart to another. In vain he sought out every way of pleasing ; he gave her books, he painted fans for her, he paid her all thoughtful and courteous attentions. When, however, he saw that it was all no use, "he was violent towards his physical nature to spite his moral ;"<sup>1</sup> he abandoned himself to an irregular life, which made demands on his powers too great to support.

As two years ago he had fled to the bosom of Nature in the freshness of its young spring life, so now did he flee. Especially frequent were his visits to Dölitz (he probably in this spring, as in preceding springs, had an attic at a hostel in

<sup>1</sup> *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, vii. Buch.—TR.

Reudnitz), for at Dölitz was there not always the chance of finding in the garden or the fields the kind and bright Friederike?<sup>1</sup> Nor did he fail to visit Sellerhausen often. In this trouble his Muse was not silent, as two years ago she had been; she inspired him to lyrics, some breathing the yearning and pain of love, but also some which speak courage and spirit, and mock at the inconstancy of maidens; these Bernhard Theodor Breitkopf set to music. Under the Breitkopfs' roof he spent a great deal of time, not only in that family, whose most intimate friendship he had long enjoyed; but also with the engraver Stock, who with a wife older than himself and two little daughters, was living in the top story. Here Goethe practised etching landscapes, and did tolerably well; one of his pictures he dedicated as "most obedient son" ("*ganz gehorsamer Sohn*") to his father, another to his true friend Hermann, a third to Behrisch. For Schönkopf he designed a Bill of Fare (*Wirthschaftsetikette*), for Kätchen a book-marker. He also practised many little vignette woodcuts.

With all this activity the fresh enjoyment of life would not come back. When in May 1768 Lessing stopped four weeks in Leipzig, it was the humour of Goethe and Horn to make no endeavour to see the rare mortal who was so near them; chance, they hoped, would bring him across their path. Lessing was present at a performance of his *Minna*; but even from this Goethe was absent. And chance was not good to him; and he was never to see Lessing.

With great joy did he look forward to the coming of Winckelmann, who, on his journey to Dessau, was to visit Oeser. Of course Wolfgang never thought himself worthy to speak with the great Expounder of Ancient Art; but what

<sup>1</sup> See Goethe's letter in verse to Friederike Oeser, 6th Nov. 1768. See especially lines to be found *Der junge Goethe*, i. 32, 33.—TR.

plans he had of riding to Dessau with his friends; he hoped often to see Winckelmann in that beautiful neighbourhood, especially in Wörlitz.<sup>1</sup> What a terrible overwhelming effect the news of Winckelmann's murder on the very confines of Germany had may then be imagined; Goethe first heard of it when going to Oeser, who was so shaken, that for a while he shut himself from almost all communication.

At about this time Goethe made the acquaintance of Behrisch's successor, Ernst Theodor Langer; for, although Count Lindenau had strictly forbidden intercourse with the wicked friend of the former tutor, Langer could not resist the wish to know one of whom he had heard so much. There was the youth possessed by the noble thirst for knowledge and culture; breathing intellect and life, though just then of such a melancholy mood; it was nothing wonderful if the disciplined learned earnest man, superior in age by five years, was so completely won that a close comradeship grew between them, which was nurtured by eager talk on long afternoon walks together. Langer introduced him to many fields of knowledge, especially Greek Literature, in which the teacher had wandered far.

The same power of attraction drew towards Wolfgang Georg Gröning of Bremen, his senior by four years, who, in Easter 1768, had come from Göttingen to win a Leipzig Doctor-of-Laws Degree; his love for plastic art (he was Wolfgang's successor with Oeser) effected and maintained their union.

The painful disquiet arising from the loss of Käthchen; restless excitement; irregular living; heavy Merseburg beer; coffee with milk drunk after dinner; a cold caught when bathing; the unwholesome vapours breathed when etching on steel; perhaps, too, the chest affection which he had brought

<sup>1</sup> It is interesting to note that Goethe in 1778 planned the Weimar Park on the model of the beautiful one at Wörlitz, then unique.—TR.

on himself at Auerstädt on his journey to Leipzig three years before by over-violent exertion; all combined to disturb the sensitive balance of his organisation so violently, that one July night he was attacked by a violent hemorrhage. In the next room slept the poor theological student Limprecht, whom Goethe's ill-humour had often of late made suffer. Just enough strength he had to rouse quickly this neighbour, and to send him to Dr. Reichel, a friendly physician who lived at the Breitkopfs'. By Dr. Reichel's exertions immediate danger was staved off, but there was still imperative need of rest. Then an abscess that formed on the left side of the neck would need long care. The families Breitkopf, Reich, Stock, Oeser, and Schönpkopf, were interested in the sick lad as if he were one of their own; and of his younger acquaintance, beside his good next room neighbour, Horn, Hermann, Langer, and Gröning, proved their true friendship. Langer not only would often talk by his bedside till the deep of night of matters intellectual, but would guide the sufferer in a calm and peaceful way, which itself was healing, towards thoughts of religion; laying before the vexed and restless heart his own sure belief in the Divineness of that Christian Revelation which enjoins patience under tribulation; to all which Wolfgang gave the more willing heed because it came from one whose clear and well-trained intelligence he had in other relations learned to respect. Yet he could himself accept the Christian Revelation solely in moments of glowing emotion, of overflowing soul, in no wise by the critical reason. A noteworthy incident of this time comes by his own account—he made over to Langer whole basketfuls of his once so much prized German poets and critics, receiving in exchange some Greek classics.

As he grew better his friends took him on many walks, and tried every way of amusing him. Since his recovery went

on steadily, he hoped to leave Leipzig on his birthday—the day which he always liked to choose for important acts. His strength, indeed, would not be restored so soon; his nerves had suffered too much. Almost a year and a half later he writes to the younger Breitkopf:—"However sound and strong one may be, in that accursed Leipzig one burns out as fast as a bad torch. Well, well, the poor fox-cub will little by little recover."<sup>1</sup> If, in this letter, he exhorts the recipient to beware of loose living,<sup>2</sup> there is here no proof that loose living had been a cause of his sufferings; the expression—"the poor cub will recover little by little" refers to his ill-fortune in love, so in the *Zueignung* (*Dedication*) of his *Neue Lieder* we have the allusion to the fox of fable.<sup>3</sup>

Reich, who through Weisse had got the publishing of Wieland's *Musarion*, showed the convalescent its first proof-sheets—it was just then getting into type. Peculiarly impressive at the time, and with a new impulsive leaning towards the ancients, he thought he saw the antique rise again in this charming poem with its thorough interpenetration of reality.<sup>4</sup>

He often went to Dölitz to see Friederike, who met him "with great glee, and almost laughed herself to death at the

<sup>1</sup> Goethe to Gottlob Breitkopf; date guessed at in *Der junge Goethe* is August 1769. See *Der junge Goethe*, i. 67.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> "Nur eins will ich dir sagen, hüte dich vor der Liederlichkeit. Es geht uns Mannsleuten mit unsern Kräften wie den Mädchen mit der Ehre, einmal zum Henker eine Jungferschaft, fort ist sie."—TR.

<sup>3</sup> *Der junge Goethe*, i. 109, 110. The poet who sees young people love-making warns them, whereupon they laugh and exclaim:—"The fool! The fox who has lost his tail would be glad" to see others like himself, or to that effect; to which the poet replies:—"The fable does not hold good in this instance, the honest fox-cub without a tail warns you to beware of the trap."—TR.

<sup>4</sup> *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, vii. Buch.—"*Musarion* wirkte am meisten auf mich. . . . Hier war es, wo ich das Antike lebendig und neu wieder zu sehen glaubte."—TR.



absurd notion of anybody's dying of consumption at twenty."<sup>1</sup> By cheerful description of her enjoyable days in the country, she imparted to him some of her own delight in life. He saw her frequently, on one occasion in the theatre; when he was leaving Leipzig he gave her a copy of his songs with Breitkopf's music, and begged her to sing them in memory of him. Breitkopf promised to set Goethe's other songs too, and already publishing was talked of. All his friends felt the warmest concern at his departure. His hardest trial, which he yet could not deny himself, was the farewell to Kätchen, whom he saw for the last time on the evening of August 26. It was agreed that there should be a correspondence, only he must pledge himself never to write before the first day of each month. Of course there was no denying that he had lost Kätchen, and how could he, as he then was, put forward any claim to her. But this he might hope, little as it was, that though he had been such a torment to her, she would often think of her "good youth," and wish for his presence. On August 27, the eve of his departure, he set out to see her once more, but he became so very sad that he did not go through with it. "I was as far as the door," he writes from Frankfurt to explain why he had not taken a final leave; "I saw the lamp burning and went to the foot of the stairs, but I had not the heart to go up. For the last time!—how should I ever have come down?"<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Goethe to Friederike Oeser, 13th February 1769. The passage here quoted will be found *Der junge Goethe*, i. 47.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> Goethe to Christian Gottlob Schönkopf, October 1, 1768. See *Der junge Goethe*, i. 23. That he saw Kätchen for the last time on August 26, 1768, is fixed by a letter of August 26, 1769, in which he says to her:—"This day a year ago I saw you for the last time." See *Der junge Goethe*, i. 65.—TR.



## CHAPTER II.

INTERIM BETWEEN LEIPZIG AND STRASSBURG SPENT IN  
FRANKFURT.

SEPTEMBER 1768—APRIL 1770.

ON the 3d of September 1768 Wolfgang saw old Frankfurt again. He was received with passionate tenderness, the bright lad who had gone forth in blooming health now returning wasted and pale, life half despaired of. His father was in his gentlest mood, and did his very best to hide the disappointment which he felt at seeing that all his plan of study for Wolfgang had fallen to the ground. Cornelia's gladness at her brother's return was the warmer since she had much to tell him which even her mother might not hear. She wished to learn and read more as she liked, and it had been hard on her to be the only object of her father's teaching activity. Her whole soul was opened to her brother; he had been and was her model in all things; even her stiff hand-writing had become exactly like his; and there were many notes in his style which she too struck. One deep secret regret of hers was that with her bold features it was unlikely that she should ever win love; and a noble man's love was, she felt, the first and chief thing required to make life a real good. Though her father did not interfere with her coming and going or her amusements, his never-ending schoolmaster-like instruction had been excessively oppressive

to her, and she had grown more and more hardened against him ; it was no use that her mother tried to qualify the bitterness of this relation ; poor mother, she had plenty of trouble, with Wolfgang, too, a cause of so much anxiety to his parents. In her distress she had drawn closer and closer to the pious Fräulein von Klettenberg and her circle ; not indeed that her natural healthy trustfulness in an all-wise and all-gracious Guidance had in any wise been darkened. That dear friend, clear-sighted in temporal as in spiritual things, was a wise counsellor in all difficulties. Shortly before Wolfgang's return, his grandfather's tongue and right arm had been paralysed when he was in the midst of official duty, and he could not yet speak. Also Wolfgang had to lament the recent death of his friend the painter, Seekatz of Darmstadt, on whose advice and help he had so much reckoned. He himself could look forward to being well soon, for the doctor said that his lungs were quite sound though the passages to them were affected. He had of course to arrange his rooms ; then there were visits ; and the fair just beginning with its sights and sounds laid claim to his attention. Very soon after his return, Jung, a maker of lay figures, whom Wolfgang had known as an attendant at the Leipzig Art Academy, and who had letters of recommendation from Oeser, came through Frankfurt on a business journey, and found a kind reception in the Goethes' hospitable home. Wolfgang met again in Frankfurt many of his old friends, among them Crespel, who stayed until November. It was now that he made acquaintance with his fellow-townsmen, the painter George Melchior Kraus, son of the host of the White Snake. Kraus was in his thirty-fifth year, and was just back from Paris. Cornelia's friends—few of whom he did not already know—were something quite different from the bright refined Leipzig ladies ; their sentimentality, their finical prudery, their prim manners, their tedious dulness, repelled him.

But there was one new friend and correspondent of his sister's, Katharina Fabricius of Worms, in whom he felt much interested, so much that he began himself to write letters to her.

His heart clung to Leipzig, and especially to the households Schönkopf and Oeser. Already on the 13th of September 1768, we find him turning in loving remembrance to his "dearest instructor." To Käthchen about the same time, he sent a pair of scissors, a knife, and leather for two pairs of shoes; these were her fairings. To Schönkopf he writes on the 1st October that, though yet uncertain whether he has not got consumption, things are looking better; his thin cheeks are filling out, and since he has "neither maidens nor the cares of life" to trouble him, he hopes to progress in his recovery. The latter part of the letter is addressed to Käthchen; her neck-handkerchief is ready, the fan is in hands; and he will paint materials for slippers for her. The girl's reply was wayward and saucy, as it might have been in the happiest days of their mutual intercourse.

The doctor tried with tonics to revive the lad's relaxed forces, and pronounced extreme calm indispensable. Nevertheless, Wolfgang could not help pushing on with many occupations; he drew, etched, and wrote; and his professional studies might not be entirely neglected in the face of his father's anxiety. Generally he was so busy that his sister hardly liked to disturb him in his attic-room. He became intimate at this time with an amiable young English fellow in a Frankfurt boarding-school. With this new friend, Cornelia fell passionately in love, but alas! he did not stay long in Frankfurt, nor had she success in a scheme of getting her Harry's portrait sketched by Kraus at a concert party which the Goethes gave—Cornelia played the piano well. Several of Wolfgang's Leipzig friends in passing through Frankfurt called to see him; there was one of them who

resembled the young Englishman ; Cornelia felt the attraction. Once Wolfgang went with a medical friend, Strassburg-bound, to see the great Senckenberg Institution which had sprung up during his Leipzig absence. His greatest pleasure was in visiting the private art collections of Frankfurt ; but he did not succeed in his attempts to diffuse among the owners the ideas which he had derived from Oeser.

His monthly letter to Käthchen of the 1st November (1768) strikes the usual note of cheery jesting. Now, indeed he is being punished for his sins against Leipzig ; his present sojourn is as disagreeable as the Leipzig period might have been agreeable, if certain persons had thought fit to make it so. Five days later we find him replying to Friederike Oeser lightly, in irregular rhyming verse. The songs which he has left her she may sing in happy mood there in her Dölitz, where he had sung them from heaviness. This letter was enclosed with one addressed to her father, dated three days later (Nov. 9th, 1768), in which he expresses his deep gratitude.<sup>1</sup> About this time he read Wieland's *Idris* (published by Reich), Gerstenberg's *Ugolino*, Weisse's *Grossmuth für Grossmuth*, and a *Treatise on Engraving* translated from the English.<sup>2</sup> In a letter of the 24th November to Oeser he says that his reflections on these works are "perhaps tolerable for a spoken conversation, but are far from having either the order or exactness which would make them fit for writing down." So little was it his way to make ado with any hastily grasped theory. Cornelia writes on Nov. 16th to her friend Katharina Fabricius, that Wolfgang is drawing her the nicest heads, and that he is just engaged on a new comedy. As further on she says that he is reading to her all that he writes, while she

<sup>1</sup> This letter has been already quoted from. See p. 86.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> So we learn from the letter spoken of immediately after. —*Der junge Goethe*, i. 37, 38.—TR.

listens with great pleasure, we may be sure she has long ago heard both the pieces which he brought from Leipzig. But he had already begun to suffer again, and the chief cause this time was want of care in using the acids necessary for his engraving.

On Cornelia's birthday (December 7th, 1768) Wolfgang was attacked by a violent internal pain ; all the remedies tried failed to lessen his fearful sufferings. Cornelia, unable to bear the sight of his agony, went away in despair. His mother in her utter need tried her old pious plan of opening a Bible with a sharp point. The text, "Thou shalt yet plant vines upon the mountains of Samaria" (Jeremiah xxxi. 5), filled her with joyous confidence, and all her life she remembered that beautiful promise, as indeed did Wolfgang too. When the orthodox methods of the pharmacopœia failed, resort was had to alchemy. Fräulein Klettenberg's good physician, Dr. Metz, a student of alchemy, had not long before effected a wonderful cure on that pious friend, with a salt prepared in the method of alchemy. Wolfgang's mother, who had chosen this physician for herself and her son, entreated him, going to him in *almost* the last resort, to give the sufferer this magic salt. And lo ! there was at once a change for the better, the threatened suffocation was at least averted. Cornelia writes to her friend, that Wolfgang's dreadful state of danger had lasted two days, then things had become somewhat better, yet he could not remain a single quarter of an hour in upright posture. For three weeks he could not leave his room, during which time he saw almost no one but the doctor, the surgeon, and the members of the family. A new tumour had formed on his neck ; first they tried to reduce it, then to bring it to a head, at last they had to lance it. His chief consolation at this time was his power of drawing ; he made sketches of the room with its furniture



or the people who might be there, and illustrated the stories of the city which he heard.

His sufferings roused general sympathy; the only one who remained cold was his friend Müller. Cornelia tells her friends in Worms, that Wolfgang is no longer on such good terms with Müller, because their principles are so different; Müller's philosophy is deduced from what he has read; her brother's from what he has felt and seen; and she now perceives that the former is impractical. When the doctors were able to assure Wolfgang that his digestion was the only thing out of order, he became so content and light-hearted that he was even able to cheer the anxious family; yet in the few days of such near neighbourhood with death,—such closeness, as he himself puts it, to the awful strait that we all must pass over,<sup>1</sup> in those few days solemn thoughts had been his.

“In a fit of great folly,” he threw off a *Neujahrslied* (*Song of the New Year*), and even had it printed for his own amusement.<sup>2</sup> Other occupations were sketching and writing tales. The drawing was a great delight to his father, who got an old friend, the painter Morgenstern, to put in the lines of perspective correctly. Another matter about which Councillor Goethe began to talk, and not to annoy him his son fell in easily with his wishes, was the speedy resuming of law study at Strassburg. As to a third matter there was not the same harmony,—the father would fain have seen his recovering son less interested in the alchemic theorisings and experiments in which the

<sup>1</sup> In a letter to Oeser, Feb. 14, 1769. See *Der junge Goethe*, i. 57.—Tr.

<sup>2</sup> Goethe to Käthchen Schönkopf, Dec. 30th, 1768. See *Der junge Goethe*, i. 40. In this letter he also speaks of the drawing and writing tales (*Mährchen*). The curious interference of his father with his sketches is from *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, viii. Buch. The result on the sketches was rather amusing. A like interference three years earlier has been described. See p. 56.—Tr.



doctor who was thought to have saved his life, and their good friend Fräulein Klettenberg were zealously occupied.

Horn was the first to hear from Wolfgang of his recovery ; Horn was to tell Käthchen, whose extreme concern had been a salve to Wolfgang's heart. "There is good in misfortune too," he writes to her on December 30th (1768): "I have learned much in illness, that I could have learned nowhere else in life. . . . When I get better I shall go to foreign places, and how soon I shall see Leipzig again depends solely on you, and some one else" (the preferred suitor Kanne, of course) ; "meanwhile I think to visit France, to see how life is lived there ; and to learn French." Should he, however, for all this pleasant scheming, play the foolish stroke of dying before Easter arrives, he will order a gravestone in Leipzig churchyard.<sup>1</sup>

The early days of the New Year (1769) found him able to go out of doors again. Good *Legationsrath* Moritz, who hoped great things from Wolfgang, gave a party to celebrate his recovery. Since farces were just then the order of the day, Wolfgang began one with the title *Lustspiel in Leipzig*, which was also to be printed.<sup>2</sup> He confides to Oeser his doubts concerning Nos. 28 and 30 of Lessing's lately published *Antiquarische Briefe*. But before Oeser's reply arrived, Wolfgang had had another severe attack which kept him in his room for four weeks. When well enough to write he turns—full of annoyance at not having heard from Leipzig—

<sup>1</sup> That she may visit his grave at least once a year on his Name Day. See *Der junge Goethe*, i. 41.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> *Der junge Goethe*, i. 50 ; Goethe to Friederike Oeser, 13th Feb. 1769—"Hierher gehört auch dass ich in diesem neuen Jahre eine *Farçe* gemacht habe, die ehstens unter dem Titel : *Lustspiel in Leipzig* erscheinen wird. Den [denn] die *Farçen* sind ietzt auf allen Parnassen *contrebande*, wie alles aus der Zeit Ludwigs des Vierzehenden

to his Käthchen, who was still a constant presence in his thoughts. "During the last fortnight I have again been aground" (*sitz' ich wieder fest*), he writes (Jan. 31st, 1769). "At the beginning of this year I was let out on parole; that little bit of freedom too is past, and I shall probably also spend part of February in the cage, for God knows when it will be all over; however, I am quite calm about it, and I hope you will be so too. . . . Dear God, here I am merry again even in the midst of pain. If I were not so cheery how should I bear it all. Continuously shut up in one place for almost two months."<sup>1</sup> Still on the 14th of February, as he informs Oeser, imprisoned by illness, though with the best hope of recovery; with the winter, he hopes, his winter too will pass away, his spring return. Yet Leipzig, whither Oeser had invited him, he cannot revisit so soon, perhaps not within a year; when he comes he wants to make a good stay. He seems at this time to have played waywardly with the imagination of himself, a settler down in Leipzig, yet leading Käthchen to his home a bride. Oeser had replied that Lessing had in those letters enormously erred in his remarks on the passage from Pliny; let Wolfgang only watch a heraldic engraver for an hour, and he will laugh away his sickness, to think of the observations of Christ, Klotz, and Lessing on the subject. Wolfgang, when thanking Oeser for enlightening him on the matter, adds this characteristic utterance:—"Lessing! Lessing! if he were not Lessing I would fain say something.

[Vierzehnten]." Does the following translation contain the natural sense of this passage? "Here I should mention that since the New Year began, I have written a farce, which as soon as possible shall be published in Leipzig, as a comedy" (not as a farce.) "For on every Parnassus farces are at present contraband" (not allowable); "as indeed is everything of the Louis Quatorze Age." The *Lustspiel* was destroyed by Goethe before he went to Strassburg.—TR.

<sup>1</sup> *Der junge Goethe*, i. 42, 44.

I cannot write in his dispraise ; he is a conqueror, and will be a rude hewer of wood in Herr Herder's *Wäldchen* " (the first number of the *Kritische Wäldchen*—*Critical Groves*—treats of Lessing's *Laokoon*), "if he falls upon them. He is a phenomenon of intellect, and after all such phenomena are not common in Germany. Whoever does not wish to agree to all he says, need not ; only let him not be contradicted ! Voltaire has not been able to do our Shakespeare any wrong. No smaller spirit will overcome a greater." In this letter he sends greeting to Clodius, who, at Oeser's intercession, had at last to Wolfgang's great relief forgotten his ancient grudge.

In a letter to Friederike, dated a day earlier (Feb. 13th, 1769), he speaks very amusing, but true words of the whole so-called " Bardic Poetry," and especially of the *Gesang Rhingulphs des Barden als Varus geschlagen war*. All that is strange and forced displeases him ; the poet's task is to make us feel what we have not felt before ; but mere noise and exclamation instead of pathos is ineffectual. Gerstenberg he reverences ; it is a great spirit with *principia* apart. Of Gerstenberg's *Ugolino* he observes that grace and deep pathos do not combine to a worthy subject of a noble art. Lessing, he thought, gave poetry too wide a scope.<sup>1</sup> One must differ even from the great spirits ; who err as do small ones, the latter because each conceives his own horizon the world's boundary ; the former because they know no boundary. Light is Truth, yet the sun, the source of Light, is not Truth. Falsehood is Darkness. And what is Beauty ? Neither Darkness nor Light, but Twilight ; the offspring of Truth and Falsehood. In his confinement—all his instruments a pair of compasses, paper, pen and ink, and two books—he thinks

<sup>1</sup> Here I have taken the liberty of adding from Goethe's letter some links of connection that seemed necessary. See *Der junge Goethe*, i. 53.  
—TR.

that he penetrates in knowledge of Truth as far as—nay farther than many a man with all the apparatus of libraries and learning.<sup>1</sup> Nothing is true which is not simple. Humbleness and Reflectiveness are the qualities most needful to guide our steps in the path of Simplicity. Thus did he during his weary illness solace himself with the most penetrating contemplations on Art and Poetry. Indeed, the general cheery tone of the whole letter—in which he, as usual, breaks a lance with Friederike—betrays nothing less than that he who wrote it was an invalid. If his poems, as she says, have not pleased her, she has not viewed them aright ; let her throw them into the fire, for he is one of those patient poets who when one poem is not approved make another. He would be very glad to hear from her something about the last good books out ; in Frankfurt you heard nothing of them until a quarter of a year after the fair. Though he had almost entirely given up reading new literature, and though his own verse will not flow—except in a little bit of intoxication—he cannot all at once completely refuse to satisfy the longing for literary novelties.

Though Wolfgang was soon able to leave his sick chamber, the old vigour was not there, just as the old freshness of soul was not. No departure for Strassburg could at present be thought of ; this was a great disappointment to his father. Wolfgang buried himself deeper and deeper in books on Alchemy and in pietistic meditation ; for Fräulein Klettenberg and Moritz had gained great influence over him during his recovery. It was a matter of course that with them he again began going to the Lord's Supper. About

<sup>1</sup> Immediately after the letter runs thus :—" A great savant is seldom a great philosopher, and he who has painfully turned over the leaves of many books despises the easy simple Book of Nature ; and yet nothing is true, etc." *Der junge Goethe*, i. 53.—TR.

this time (March 1769), he had the pleasure of a visit from his Leipzig friend Gervinus—a native of Zweibrücken and very intimate with Oeser. From Gervinus he heard that “Rhingulph the Bard,” was *Oberamtsadvokat* Kretzschmann of Zittau, who had just visited Leipzig, where he had been received with all honours. Meanwhile Friederike had emptied all the vial of her saucy wrath on Wolfgang, especially because he had spoken ill of her sex. His answer (April 8th, 1769) is in the same strain. Of his own sex, he says, his estimate is but low; he does not rate woman higher, and that is woman’s own fault. He still maintains that girls are in general too easily credulous; Friederike’s distrustfulness shows him that the more prudent ones are full of suspicion. And though “Rhingulph” is, he hears, Friederike’s friend, yet he cannot retract what he has said of the Bardic poems. Saxony has tamed the savage and bold nature of his republican spirit, but it has not made him a singer in mutual admiration concerts. To her father he owes that perception of the Ideal which is his guide in criticism; of course he at the same time yields to each kind of art, by its own standard, its due praise.

At the beginning of April (1769) Horn, whom he had eagerly desired to see, returned, his three years of Leipzig study over. Horn thought not only that Wolfgang looked unhealthy, but that the air of the Kingdom had made him “*stipide*.” And Wolfgang too, was disappointed in Horn. Love sickness sat so oddly on his merry friend, and sentimentality was nauseous to one who professed no faith in maidens. As Horn was pursuing his law studies with great diligence, and found in Wolfgang no response to his ecstasies, it came about that the friends saw each other less often than before.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Horn was in love with Constantie Breitkopf. See as to his sentimentality, Goethe’s letter to Käthchen, June 1st, 1769. *Der junge Goethe*, i.



When Wolfgang was again able to make use of his attic, he provided himself with a little draught-furnace, and all things needful for alchemic experimenting; his father, though viewing this enterprise with unfavourable eyes, did not interfere to prevent it. With the assistance of his physician and Fräulein Klettenberg, he made many successful experiments; one often renewed with great pleasure was the demonstration of *Liquor Silicum* (*Kieselsaft*). Books on Alchemy became almost a craze with him, though he, seeking exact knowledge, was sometimes made desperate by their strange mystifications. The bookseller Fleischer—Wolfgang's old travelling-companion to Leipzig—brought out in this very year (1769) a new edition of Welling's chief work, *Opus mago-cabbalisticum*. These were dark studies, but they led him to Boerhaave's clearer Chemistry (*Elementa Chemiae*); and to the same author's *Aphorismen*—on the diagnosis and cure of diseases. With peculiar zest he used to read in the four volumes of Arnold's *Unparteiische Kirchen- und Ketzergeschichte*,<sup>1</sup> the pious author of which finds true Christianity to be exactly with those whom the Church has cast out; this accorded well with Wolfgang's temper; he being a passionate advocate of intellectual freedom. The various theories of God and the World which he met in this book were full of interest to him; and his active intelligence knew no rest until, borrowing the main features from Welling, he had thought out a system of his own.

By degrees he became again interested in his sister's circle of friends. Though among them he could not find the roguish wit, the culture, and versatility of the Leipzig ladies, there was a kindly good nature and a cheery capacity for

62. As to their isolation from each other, see Goethe's letter to Kätchen, Jan. 23, 1770. *Der junge Goethe*, i. 72, 73.—TR.

<sup>1</sup> *An Impartial History of the Church and of Heresies*.—TR.



enjoyment in them, not without considerable attraction for Wolfgang. And now about the 20th of May (1769) Käthchen sent him word through Horn of her betrothal with Dr. Kanne. Long as he had been prepared for this, it was a heavy blow. Not until the 1st of June did he pluck up spirit enough to wish her joy. Through his whole letter you feel the presence of his piercing misery alternatively with the bitterness of his contempt for woman's fickleness. Maidens' hearts are indeed anything but marble. He will not write again until October. That she calls him her dear friend, her best friend, scorches his soul when he remembers all the lovers she has salted down with "friendship." "I have always told you that my fate is bound up with yours. Soon, perhaps, you will see how true my words were ; you will soon perhaps hear some news which you do not expect." This is a dark hint at his resolve to leave Germany immediately. When in August (1769), a report spread in Leipzig that he had again become ill, Käthchen wrote inquiring very anxiously about him. Exactly a year from the day on which he had last seen her, he then replies in a short letter ; with few sharp outlines you find his bitter grief imaged there. The report of his illness had not been quite justified ; he is in tolerable health ; often, however, not so good as he could wish. "You can if you like suppose that I was prevented from writing to you by indisposition only ; other causes will soon perhaps prevent you from writing to me. . . . I am intolerable to-day. If I were in Leipzig I would sit beside you and make a long face ; you doubtless remember such a spectacle. Yet no ! if I were with you now, what content ! O could I call back the three and a half years that are gone, I swear to you, Käthchen, dear Käthchen, I would be wiser."<sup>1</sup>

At about the same time (August 1769) he wrote begging

<sup>1</sup> *Der junge Goethe*, i. 65, 66.

the younger Breitkopf—Gottlob—to write him one letter even. “I am spending my life tolerably content and quiet;” he confides to this true friend. I have half-a-dozen English girls whom I often meet; and am in love with none of them; they are charming beings, and make my life uncommonly pleasant. One who had never seen Leipzig might do right well here; but Saxony, Saxony! ay! ay! that is the strong tobacco.” Among the girls whom he now often met were four Gerocks and Crespel’s two sisters. In this circle he could often muster brightness enough; though it was rather good animal spirits, as he himself says, than a genuine joy of the heart; still in the fresh Present he could often forget his distant sweetheart, and how he had lost her. It is noteworthy that in the letter last quoted he does not directly speak of his songs—they had been printing since Easter; only he begs his friend to let him know what the elder Breitkopf—the publisher of them—had to say.

Weak in body, and suffering from the smart of unrequited love, the bond which drew him to the godly grew closer, so that on the 21st and 22d of September (1769) we find him in Moritz’s company, present at the Synod of the Herrnhut Community at Castle Marienborn in the County Oberisenburg. This castle Zinzendorf, when the old line of Counts who lived there died out (1725), had rented of the Count von Isenburg-Büdingen, whose man of business was Goethe’s friend Moritz. At this Synod Goethe met a still living immediate disciple of Zinzendorf, the Moravian Neisser, who had been a cutler; a Swiss Loretz, once a captain; a French ex-major of noble birth, etc. These excellent men, he at a later time tells us, had his entire respect; yet they, not less than Fräulein Klettenberg, refused to the young student the name *Christian*, because he could not accept the doctrine that man is not to expect anything from his own strength, that all his good is to be an outflow of the Divine favour.

In this autumn (1769) too he went to Worms, perhaps in Moritz's company. Here he saw Charitas Meixner, probably by this time formally engaged. Then there was Charitas's cousin Trapp, and Katharina Fabricius, whom he now learned to know personally; it will be remembered how they had been correspondents. At the *Eulenburg*, then the residence of the family Kampf, beyond the Mainz Gate, he scratched his name, with the date, on a pane of glass.

Not until the end of September (1769) was the printing of his songs to Breitkopf's music completed. On the 30th of October there was an article on them in Hiller's *Nachrichten und Anmerkungen die Musik betreffend*. It says that the writer by no means lacks talent for this light and sprightly kind of poetry; the songs had well deserved to be made public, and to have such good music composed to them. Wolfgang, whose name remained hidden, was painfully moved by the publication of these poems, the remembrancers of so different a time. Nothing was farther from his thoughts than to suppose that they had any particular merit.

Soon after this he saw his first great man, the Corsican Paoli, who when going to England passed through Frankfurt. Paoli met all the curious flockers around him with good-humoured politeness. Another arrival in Frankfurt was J. G. Schlosser, who had given up his place at Treptow to practise again as an attorney. He maintained friendly intercourse with Wolfgang, who had changed so much since they last met.

Very painful were his feelings when Kätchen asked him to write a poem for her near approaching marriage-day. He did not answer the letter; even at a much later date (December 12, 1769), he but incidentally refers to it, saying that he had attempted some marriage odes, but all his attempts had expressed either too much or too little of his own emotions,

and how could she have expected him to celebrate worthily in verse any joyful festival?

In this winter (1769-70), Wolfgang's health, by degrees, became so far re-established that he was again able to take a thorough pleasure in the theatre, in concerts, and parties. But there were still throbbings and shootings of the pain for his lost love. In December (1769) a dream, in which he saw K  thchen—married, so stirred him that he could remain no longer silent. He wrote next morning, asking whether the marriage has really taken place; if it has, he hopes that it is the beginning of happiness for her. "Physically, I am restored to health," he writes, "but my soul has not yet healed; I am in a silent, inactive calm, but that is not happiness. And in this languor my imaginative powers so drowse that I can conjure up no shape of what was once most dear to me. . . . No marriage ode have I to send you. . . . Since—ay, this long time back, my poems have been dreary and disordered as my brain, as you can perceive by the greater part of those already printed, and as you will perceive by others which are not printed yet."

He has been unable to restrain himself from writing to her once again before the certain tidings of her marriage has come to him. She is not to reply herself, since he would fain see her writing, hear her voice no more, it is ill enough that his dreams are so busy. Yet within three months shall she receive one last letter from him, saying whither he is to travel, and when. The books which she wished for he sends to her address.<sup>1</sup>

His departure for Strassburg at Easter (1770) was now a settled thing. Father and son were equally eager for it; the former, because he thought that Wolfgang's law studies had

<sup>1</sup> Goethe to K  thchen Sch  nkopf, December 12, 1769. *Der junge Goethe*, i. 68-71.—TR.

been too long intermitted ; and Wolfgang, because he earnestly desired to put a still greater distance between himself and Kätchen ; in a foreign land—in France—his pain would find ease. Strassburg might be called a French city, for, though the French reckoned the inhabitants of Elsass mere German subjects of the king, France had yet made the plundered territory an assured possession.

An indication of the formation of firm resolves is to be found in the setting aside at this time of a quarto note-book with the superscription : *Ephemerides. Was man treibt, Heut dies und morgen das.* 1770. The contents are various ; short quotations from books read, titles of books, original reflections, written in French or Latin for practice. The first third of this book, written before he had left Frankfurt, shows how he was occupied with the languages and literatures of France and Germany, but not to the exclusion of Wieland's Translation of Shakespeare ; trace of Greek studies there is none, a little law, a great deal about the theory and history of plastic art, of poetry, and of music ; meditations on God and the world ; finally, many indications of alchemic and cabalistic studies.<sup>1</sup>

When he heard from Horn that the wedding was put off to Easter (1770), his heart leapt at the wild thought that fortune might yet give him Kätchen for himself. Writing to her on the 23d of January (1770), he says, that he is living in content, is healthy, and bright, and industrious, for he has no girl in his head. But he is tired of Frankfurt, and will leave for Strassburg at the end of March. There he will be always glad to get a letter from *Kätchen Schönkopf*. "You are, and always have been, the loveable maiden, and will also be the loveable wife. And I—I shall still be Goethe. You know what that means. When I name myself, I name all of myself,

<sup>1</sup> Reprinted in A. Schöll, *Briefe und Aufsätze von Goethe aus den Jahren 1766 bis 1786.* Weimar, 1846. S. 63-140.—TR.



and you know that ever since I saw you I have been only a part of you." From Strassburg he will go to Paris, where he hopes to stay a good while. "And after that, God knows whether anything will come of it!" Should her marriage not take place within the year—well he will not hang himself because of the delay—perhaps he would himself yet bring her the so long-promised neckerchief and fan, and address her as "Mademoiselle Schönkopf," or "Käthchen Schönkopf." Talking of Horn and his Constantie, Wolfgang says it may end with a wedding after all, and that would be a wonderful sight; but there might be another wedding much more strange, and yet not impossible, only improbable. When Cornelia marries and goes away, he will divide the house with his parents; ten rooms, handsome and well furnished in the Frankfurt taste, will fall to him.<sup>1</sup> Since, however, it seems unlikely that she will have him, he begs her to woo, on his behalf, that friend of hers who most resembles her. For his travelling need not prevent the consideration of such things. "In two years I shall be back again. And then—I have a house, I have money. Heart, what desirest thou more? A wife!" This free outpouring to one who was looking forward to her marriage-day, he intends to excuse when he adds the concluding remark that, for once, he has to-day been merry.<sup>2</sup>

The painful tension of feeling resulting from this impracticable love-suit could not remain hidden from his father, whose ill-humour and disquiet were thus, of course, increased. Wolfgang had excited his father's violent anger by imprudent criticism of the architecture of the house, which we know had been so carefully planned, and by suggesting that it might be rebuilt in Leipzig taste. Through the Frau Rath's agency the

<sup>1</sup> Probably this was the plan of his father, who wished to keep Wolfgang always at his side.—DÜNTZER.

<sup>2</sup> *Der junge Goethe*, i. 72-5.—TR.



violence of this anger had been appeased, but she could not prevent a sense of injury and vexation from lasting some time.

One important reason why, at this time, poetic labours seem to have been set aside, is to be found in the diligent professional study to which Wolfgang had to give himself. On the 6th of February (1770), he writes to Assessor Hermann:—"I am glad if you have found something to your liking in my poems. I hope that in time I will do something better; with us *Quasimodogenitis* people must be indulgent. Painting, and music, and all that is called art, I have just as much at heart as ever." His friend Reich has sent him Wieland's *Dialogen des Diogenes*,<sup>1</sup> by post, and he has read it by post—at post haste. "The engravings" (by Oeser) "are excellent, and the book is—by *Wieland*. One must just name him and leave it, for to describe, to criticise the character, the mood of this man, is no task for us."<sup>2</sup> To the friendly publisher he writes (February 20, 1770):—"Feel and keep silence is all that one can do on this occasion, for even to praise a great man is not permitted, unless you are as great as he. But I have sometimes, indeed, been angry on the score of Wieland, and I think with reason. Wieland has the ill-luck to be often not understood; sometimes, perhaps, it is his own fault, but sometimes it is not, and *then* one cannot but be angry when persons vend to the public their misunderstandings as explanations." After Oeser and Shakespeare, Wieland alone he can reckon among his genuine teachers; others had pointed out his mistakes, these alone had shown him how to do better. In conclusion he begs Reich to tell the poet Wieland of one not yet man enough to fully estimate his worth, but with heart pious enough to yield to it all reverence.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Published by Reich himself.—DÜNTZER.

<sup>2</sup> *Der junge Goethe*, i. 75, 76.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* i. 77, 78.

Of all that he had himself yet written *Die Mitschuldigen*—the new draft of which, in three Acts, belongs to this winter (1769-70), and that record of penitence, *Die Laune des Verliebten*, alone pleased him ; all else composed since the Leipzig *auto-da-fé* (p. 74), whether merely sketched or actually begun, he calmly gave to the flames a short time before his departure. Among these must have been several unfinished plays—some carried as far as the third or fourth Act—and many poems. Letters and miscellaneous papers too went into the fire. Only Behrisch's beautiful transcript of his poems was spared ; the story that Behrisch had this buried with him is without foundation.

The best of his friends, his Leipzig comrade Horn, who was just about to graduate, went with him to Mainz, through which the diligence from Frankfurt to Strassburg passed. By Horn he had sent a last greeting to Kätchen on the 5th of March (1770). The news of her marriage, which took place two days later, severed the bond of yearning and hope which had held his thoughts to Leipzig so long.

Thus after an invalid seclusion of more than a year and a half (September 1768—April 1770), Wolfgang for the second time left home. The mad overweening spirit of youth in him had been scared back into reflection and thoughtfulness by long weariness of pain, yet was it not dulled and tamed ; he saw deeper than the surface of things now, yet had they not thereby become staled and discarded ; the grief of unrequited loving had clarified and ennobled emotion, had rendered more clear and definite his desire for a pure union of souls ; close intercourse with pious natures had made belief in all things high come easy to him, while his persuasion remained unweakened that each one ought to work out his own free development ; busying himself with art and literature, he had effectually furthered his endeavour after the ideal and grace,

but Wieland was still to him the master of these. In Strassburg, just a hundred years before it was won back to Germany, Goethe was to turn aside from the influence of that France whose capital he had desired to see ; he was to be penetrated for the first time with the glow of a pure ideal love, and be consecrated as its priest ; by Herder he was to be irresistibly led to the basis of all true poetry deep within the soul.

### CHAPTER III.

STRASSBURG.

APRIL 1770—AUGUST 1771.

NOT so joyous as four and a half years before when entering the Athens on the Pleisse, Wolfgang arrived at Franco-German Strassburg on the second Monday before Easter (April 2, 1770). Sorrow for the loss of Kätchen interwove with religious melancholy; his belief in his own poetic inspiration was gone; the world was not so bright as it had once seemed, the irritability and depression of sickness was still upon him.

He secured rather comfortable and convenient lodgings on the south of the very lively old Fish Market, in the house now No. 80; the landlord's name was Schlag. Goethe had a letter of recommendation to a pious tradesman, in whose business one of his cousins—perhaps a young Melber—was an apprentice. Through this connection many other good but dull people became known to him; his chief intercourse at first was with them, it was but of a superficial character.

We have evidence of the state of his mind in two letters to the poor theological student Limprecht, to whom alone he could turn in Leipzig, now grown so strange. The first of these letters was written on the eve of Good Friday (he wished to do a good work on this holy day); he sends to Limprecht, who, he feels sure, needs money, the enclosed louis d'ors, and

begs that the letter be taken as it is written, without ceremony and with all his heart.<sup>1</sup> But this was not despatched until the 19th, after having received a quite unexpected letter from Limprecht on the 18th. In the letter of the 19th Wolfgang writes:—"I am changed, greatly changed, for this I thank my Saviour; I thank him too that I am not what I should be. Luther says—'I dread my good works more than my sins.' And while one is young one is complete in no respect. I have now been here fifteen days, and I find Strassburg not a whit better or worse than anything else I have yet seen, that is, middling enough, yet with certain aspects which, for good or bad, have power to excite, to rouse from the dull everyday condition." It will be observed how very pietistic his tone of thinking remains.

On the same day (the new half year had just begun) he was inscribed among the university students. His tradesman had recommended the *table d'hôte* kept by the old maiden ladies named Lauth, at No. 13 in the *Krämergasse*. The president—by right of seniority—was the Licentiate Salzmann, Registrar of the Administrative Court, now in his forty-ninth year, a man of great benevolence and calm intelligence, who moved with measured pace, always in shoes and stockings, his hat under his arm, an umbrella his defence. He was greatly interested by Wolfgang, who, with characteristic trustfulness, yielded all his heart to him, and acted on the wise counsel of his rich experience. Frequent visits were paid to Salzmann in his yellow chamber with the Silenus on the chimney-piece. Salzmann explained to Wolfgang how best to prepare for the law examinations. There were no distinguished professors in the law school: you had only to amass learning sufficient for

<sup>1</sup> This letter is dated *Good Friday 1770, the 12th April*. But Good Friday 1770 was the 13th of April. See *Der junge Goethe*, i. 231, 232.  
—TR.

practical purposes, and to give evidence of it by passing an easy examination. Wolfgang had, at home and at Leipzig, acquired so much information that, with the aid of note-books, he could easily make himself ready. The little company of Germans who made up the *table d'hôte* spoke German mostly, and the majority of them were medical students. Goethe became intimate with a law student who had nearly completed his studies : his name was Engelbach ; he was five years older than Goethe ; he came from Buchweiler, where his father was *Kammerdirektor*. The medical student Weyland, also from Buchweiler, son of a doctor then dead, attracted Goethe, a year his senior, by his kindliness, his good disposition, his vivacity : he was, it is true, rather easily irritated. Salzmann had some years before founded a Literary Society, not limited to the frequenters of the *table d'hôte* ; in this Society new French and German books were procured, and on fixed days the members read essays and held debates. Here was, of course, another object of great interest to Wolfgang. Then Secretary Salzmann had friends everywhere, and through him Wolfgang came to know many families who made him welcome, with or without his Mentor, in their town houses, or in their country places beyond the gates. As his days grew more sociable, and as his youthful spirits were repaired and strengthened by cheery open air living, so by degrees did he withdraw from the companionship of the pietistic, who, ignorant of everything but their indoctrinated creed, incapable of unfettered thinking, had become very wearisome to him.

His intellectual thirst was of course not to be satisfied by the studies of his professional school. But the Latin and Greek classics which he had brought with him remained almost unused. The books on Alchemy were not yet put away ; however he entered gladly into philosophic speculation, to which Salzmann also was inclined. In *Ephemerides* we find



Moses Mendelssohn's *Phädon* compared with the *Phaedo* of Plato;<sup>1</sup> this belongs to the early Strassburg period.

When the Austrian Arch-Duchess, Marie Antoinette, the betrothed of the Dauphin, journeying to Paris, entered Strassburg on the 7th of May (1770), Wolfgang hastily threw off a satirical poem in French.<sup>2</sup> A Frenchman of his acquaintance criticised with great severity his verse and his choice of language, and, so far as Goethe himself remembered, this was his last attempt to compose poetry in French. Indeed about this time we find as little done in German verse-making as in landscape sketching. He was differently employed. There was so much dancing in and about Strassburg, that he, having neglected the art in Leipzig, had to get lessons; his master was a Frenchman, the celebrated Sauveur. With the help of his two daughters Sauveur soon made Wolfgang a good dancer. The love story which is connected with these dancing lessons is well known from Goethe's charming but probably freely heightened account.<sup>3</sup>

Very late in the half year came a third native of Buchsweiler to Strassburg and to the *table d'hôte*. The theological student, Franz Christian Lersé, six weeks older than Goethe, matriculated on the 8th of June (1770). He was remarkable for calm prudence, for clear decision, for exactness and love of order; he was kindly and true-hearted, with plenty of dry

<sup>1</sup> Schöll: *Briefe und Aufsätze*, S. 89 *et seq.*—TR.

<sup>2</sup> He satirised the order which forbade the presence of deformed, or lame, or blind persons, on the route of the Arch-Duchess. These were, said Goethe, precisely the people that Christ desired to see around him. *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, ix. Buch. See also in this context the extraordinary effect produced on Goethe by the horrible subjects of the pictures which decorated the chief hall of the pavilion erected to receive the young bride; the history of Jason was portrayed in them. In the less important apartments were copies of Raphael's cartoons.—TR.

<sup>3</sup> *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, ix. Buch. (the concluding pages).—TR.

humour. In all that furthered the cultivation of intellect and of heart he earnestly sympathised. Goethe and he became fast friends.

In the early midsummer holidays (1770), setting out on June 23, Goethe rode with his friend Weyland to Saarbrücken. There Weyland's half sister lived, wife of the *Regierungsrath* Schöll, and at the house of Privy *Regierungs- und Kammerpräsident* von Günderobe, Goethe could reckon on a friendly reception, for Frau Günderobe was daughter of von Stalburg, a Sheriff of Frankfurt. Engelbach went with our travellers as far as Buchweiler, where they stopped a night. Evening of June 26 saw them ride into Saarbrücken, where they were most hospitably entertained for three days, and were received in the best society of the place. On the 27th, a rainy day, Wolfgang felt impelled to write to some girl friend in Frankfurt. He speaks the praise of a light, unshackled heart, which gives us courage to woo great joys, while to be in love makes us timid and weak; love is an emotion which lulls us into inactivity, one's heart floats in it, always confined to one charmed spot, though restless and unappeased. "Tell my Fränzchen" (Franziska Crespel), he playfully writes, "that I am now as ever hers. She is very dear to me, and I was often provoked that she teased me so little; one likes to feel one's fetters when in love."<sup>1</sup> In the happy mood of this summer ride he wrote at Saarbrücken the love song, "*Wo bist du itzt mein unvergesslich Mädchen?*" in which the lover calls his beloved to return, for all her absence has been rainy weather.<sup>2</sup>

Numerous and varied conversations about the enterprises of the late Prince gave Wolfgang his first insight into the significance of mountain districts considered as human property. On their home journey our travellers saw several

<sup>1</sup> This letter will be found, *Der junge Goethe*, i. 255.—Tr.

<sup>2</sup> *Der junge Goethe*, i. 265, *Als ich in Saarbrücken*.—Tr.

machine factories, an alum manufactory, the Duttweiler coal mine, a mountain mine on fire, the resin manufactory at Sulzbach, and the glass manufactories of Friedrichsthal. At Neukirch, where they stopped a night, Wolfgang without companion visited at a late hour the lonely hunting-seat on the hill; there he sat long deep in thought. Any opportunity of subduing by the awful impressions of gloom and loneliness the nervousness which still lingered within him was welcome. Next day their way, leaving Bitsch to the left, led them through the large wild scenery of the Bärenthal. Here Wolfgang was much interested by the general good report of Baron von Dietrich, as one who by developing the mining resources of the country largely benefited men. But of yet more significance was a visit to Niederbronn. Here the spirit of the old Roman Age revealed itself amid strange circumstance to his intelligence; for in the familiar bustle of rude farm-yards he found broken antique pillars; sacrificial altars with their bas-reliefs and inscriptions; and Roman vessels of many kinds. The *Wasenburg* between Niederbronn and Oberbronn, built on a hill—its foundation Roman ruins—was not left unvisited; Goethe here read an inscription of dedication to Mercury.<sup>1</sup>

Soon after his return from the Lothringen journey, he went (July 1770) to see a place still held in great veneration, where, in the basement story of a Roman castle, a Duke's daughter was said to have found a place of refuge from the persecution of a cruel father: "with a hundred, ay, a thousand of the faithful" he made the pilgrimage to the *Odilienberg*, near Baar. The eight-day devotion in memory of the elevation of the bones of the Saint falls in the first half of July. Not far from the chapel you are shown St. Odilie's Well. Goethe also went to see the convent *Hohenburg*, said

<sup>1</sup> *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, x. Buch.—Tr.

to have been founded by Odilie, where you can see her likeness in nun's garb. The memory of the Saint impressed the poet so vividly, that nearly forty years later it hovered before him when delineating the pure, almost supernatural sufferer of the *Wahlverwandtschaften*.<sup>1</sup>

Amid all his temporal enjoyments and gaieties, amid all his earnest endeavour after wider knowledge and experience, the pietistic mode of thinking was not yet disused; he even employs the pietistic phraseology. On the 28th of July (1770), he begs his friend Trapp to pardon his discourteous silence; his unfixed life has prevented him from answering Trapp's letter. "I am living I may say for each day as it comes" he writes, "and I thank God, and often his Son when I can, that I am so circumstanced as to seem enjoined to this mode of living. . . . There was once a time when the world seemed to me as full of thorns as it now does to you. The Heavenly Physician has renewed the flame of life in my body, and I have joy and courage again." Love-likings, those "unripe stirrings of our heart," he calls fools which lead us by the nose. He declares that wise reflections are light wares, but prayer is a profitable trade;—"a single uplifting of the heart in the name of Him whom we call Lord, until we are able to call Him *Our* Lord," will load us with countless benefits.<sup>2</sup>

As the Law Examination drew near he had to work harder at his professional studies. Though it was only needful that he should prepare himself to answer questions of the usual difficulty and scope—in which task the note-books lent him by Engelbach were of great service, he could not rest satisfied with this: he was impelled to closer study of many

<sup>1</sup> *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, xi. Buch. So Franz in *Götz von Berlichingen* is named after Franz Lerse.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> *Der junge Goethe*, i. 235-7.—TR.



points. So we understand him when he says, writing on the 26th of August (1770), to his dear Klettenberg, that Jurisprudence is beginning to give him much pleasure; he, however, adds the confession that *die Chymie* is still his secret beloved. When he adds:—"Still, you see, the featherbrain (*Geck*) of old times! the ——" (the rest of the letter is lost) he is thinking of the many-sided activity which had grown second nature to him. His letter so long due had been at last prompted by a special occasion; that morning he had gone with the Christian community to celebrate our Lord's sufferings and death. As to his condition he observes:—"The many men whom I see, the many incidents which fall across my path, supply me experiences and knowledge of which I had not dreamed. For the rest I am just well enough to support a moderate and needful amount of labour, yet to be reminded at times that neither in body nor soul am I a giant." So little as yet had the old strength returned; his health was precarious. And so far is he now from overweening confidence in his own strength that, referring to his birthday, the day after the morrow, he begs his friend to pray for him, that all may be as it should be. Yet he mentions too the opinion of Salzmann, who with his cold-blooded way of looking at the world, believed himself to have found:—"That we are placed in this world specially in order to be useful to it; that we can make ourselves fit for this destination, in which task Religion will also be found of some service."<sup>1</sup>

Soon after this he passed the examination in law, and immediately began to work at his Doctor's Disputation;<sup>2</sup> probably he intended to take his degree at the close of the

<sup>1</sup> *Der junge Goethe*, i. 239-241.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> See Goethe to Engelbach, September 10, 1770. *Der junge Goethe*, i. 242.—TR.

winter half-year of 1770, but various influences were to prevent the speedy realisation of any such plan.

One of the many good things which befell our poet during his long life was his meeting with Herder in Strassburg. Herder was born in 1744, at Mohrungen, a town of East Prussia, of poor parents. He had fought his way up from poverty to distinction; he had tasted much bitterness; and now was about to spend a passionate and restless six months in Strassburg, his excitable nature stirred to the depths. He had sat at the feet of Kant in Königsberg; he had imbibed the philosophy of Hamann also; at Riga he had worked with admirable result as a minister and as a teacher in the Cathedral School (1764-1769). While there he had made himself well known with his *Fragmente zur deutschen Literatur* and his *Kritische Wälder*, though they had been published without his name. But, alas! the malignity with which Klotz and his followers had tried to undermine the position of the bold inquirer had hurried him away to assert that he had no part in these writings. By this frantic act he made his position quite untenable, for the untruthfulness of his assertion was plain as day; so he made up his mind to disappear from ken of German eyes. He went to France by sea (June 1769), landing at Nantes. He spent some time there, and then two months in Paris, in acquiring knowledge of the language, the literature, and the people, and in developing his mental culture on all sides. Then he felt a mission to be the Reformer of Livonia; he cursed such authorship as his had been hitherto; he vowed in future to write nothing which would not add to the stock of thought amassed by the human race. Then, however, he had responded to the advantageous offer of the Duke of Holstein-Gottorp; had actually set out from Kiel (July 1770) as chaplain and conductor of the delicate young Prince of Holstein on a tour to Italy. In Darmstadt,



at Merck's house, he met and loved the portionless Caroline Flachsland; and to make a home for her he accepted the post of Counsellor of the Consistory and Head Chaplain to Count William of Bückeburg. In Strassburg, where he arrived on the 5th of September (1770), he intended to gain as speedy a release as possible from the tutorship, which had become so little accordant with his plans, and to get surgical treatment for a lachrymal fistula, which was a weary disfigurement and burden. While he, in great anxiety, was



FIG. 9. Herder and Caroline Flachsland; portraits taken at the same period. From *Johann Gottfried von Herder's Lebensbild; Herausgegeben von seinem Sohne.*

awaiting day by day formal appointment to his new post, Wolfgang met him by chance at the foot of the steps of the inn *Zum Geist*, which they were both about to enter. Wolfgang knew Herder only by his *Kritische Wälder*, and, so far as the first part was concerned, he sided with Lessing, whose views are there combated. He already knew of Herder's arrival, and was prepared for his somewhat remarkable, though,

on the whole, pleasing appearance. So in the stranger clergyman with the high *toupé* and the black silk cloak carelessly gathered and shoved into a pocket, coal-black eyes full of power, and a winning expression on his somewhat pouting mouth, he immediately recognised the celebrated newcomer. Wolfgang's reverential accosting was met by Herder with gentle friendliness; it must indeed have been very welcome to him, with his "thirst and weariness of soul," and his dislike of Strassburg. They got on into free, earnest talk, so much was Herder interested; and the youth took courage, and asked leave to call. (This first meeting cannot have taken place later than the 12th of September; for on that day Herder left the inn to live at the Prince's. On the 20th he told the Prince of his resolve to leave.) Herder accepted kindly the open trustfulness and respect which Goethe showed, and being then in an agitated and tender mood he revealed the sunny side of his nature. Thus Wolfgang became more and more devoted to this new friend, who stood so high above him in experience and judgment, illuminating by flashing glances many things which had been obscure. If, as *Dichtung und Wahrheit* relates, he showed Herder *Die Mitschuldigen* without getting rebuked, it must have been in this first period, before Herder's "*repellent pulse*" ("*abstossender Puls*") had returned.

A month after this meeting with Herder began that acquaintance with the Brion household, in which Goethe's heart was so deeply stirred. Pastor Johann Jakob Brion of Sessenheim<sup>1</sup> was of Strassburg origin, and belonged to the Lutheran Evangelical Church. The little hamlet Sessenheim, girt round with pleasant orchards, stands about five minutes' walk back

<sup>1</sup> This spelling was that current in Goethe's time. The name, of which there is very early mention, had originally but one *s* in the middle; the duplication marks that the preceding vowel is short.—DÜNTZER.

from the great highroad between Strassburg and Mainz, not far from the village of Drusenheim. The parsonage was a simple unpretentious building, which had already done service for two centuries. Pastor Brion, its present occupant, was in



FIG. 10. The Parsonage of Sessenheim in 1770. From the monograph of Ph. F. Lucius; *Friederike Brion von Sessenheim*.

his fifty-fourth year, a man of strict orthodoxy, very kindly and hospitable withal. He had the spiritual charge of six parishes. Wolfgang owed his introduction to his friend Weyland, whose half-sister was married to the brother of the pastor's wife. The "*Frau Pfarrerin*," Magdalena Salomea, now forty-six years of age, was, like her husband, of Strassburg origin; her maiden name was Schöll; and the brother just mentioned was the *Regierungsrath* Schöll whom we have already met in Saarbrücken. The eldest daughter of the Brion family was the wife of a pastor in Baden; in the parental home, beside a boy, Christian, seven years of age,

were still three daughters—Maria Salomea, who was only a few days younger than Wolfgang; Friederike Elisabetha, who was eighteen or nineteen; and Jakobe Sophia, who was about four years younger than Friederike. In *Dichtung und Wahrheit* there is a wonderfully fresh and vivid account of the impression—doubtless idealised in the poet's memory—which the light slender Friederike made. Bright blue eyes, a delicate small face, her pretty nose, tip-tilted, made saucy inquiry of the air, a neck that seemed too slight for the dark-gold masses borne on the dainty little head, a charming German costume which well became her—with such charms did Friederike—they called her Riekchen—present herself before Wolfgang, whose passionate heart of youth she was to fill for the first time with the deep throbbings of an ideal love.

The delicacy of chest from which she suffered escaped Wolfgang's knowledge at this time; she went and came so fast in almost bird-like flights without losing breath, he thought her parents' anxiety about her excessive. Her more robust elder sister, solidly prudent and decided, presented a contrast which heightened the loveliness of her refined, tender, ardent presence. She stood charmingly on the boundary which divides the girl of country life from the girl of city life.

Two letters remain to us which relate to that first visit to Sessenheim, the free poetic rendering of which, in *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, is so instinct with imperishable breath. To a girl, probably the friend to whom he almost four months ago wrote from Saarbrücken extolling the fortune of having a light free heart, he writes on the day after his return from Sessenheim—the 14th of October (1770):—"I have never had such vivid experience of what it is to be merry without the heart having any share in it, as at present, as here in Strassburg. An acquaintance widely extended among nice people, a lively cheery society chases day after day away, leaves me little time



for thinking, and none at all of the calm needful for feeling, and when one is not feeling one's friends are certainly not in mind. To sum up : my present life is exactly like a sleigh-ride, plenty of brilliance and bell-tinkle, but just as little for the heart as there is much for the eye and ear." Why he now writes he does not, indeed, plainly confess :—"I have been spending some days (*cinige Tage*) in the country among very charming people. The society of the amiable daughters of the house, the fair country scenery, and the kindest autumn weather, awoke in my heart every emotion that had fallen asleep, every memory of what I love."<sup>1</sup>

Next day (October 15, 1770) he must write to Friederike herself, venturing to address her as "dear new friend," since at first glance his eyes read in her eyes that there was hope of friendship between them, and for their hearts he would answer. What exactly he would write to his "dear ~~dear~~ *new* friend" he does not know; but he notes by a certain inward unrest that he longs to be with her. At farewell she must have seen how sad was parting to him :—"You would not believe that the city bustle, contrasted with your sweet country joys, would be distasteful. Yet in truth, Mamsell, Strassburg never seemed so vacant as it does now. I hope indeed for better days, when time has a little dimmed the remembrance of our dainty and humorous merrymakings, when I no longer feel so vividly how sweet and good my new friend is. Yet could I, or would I, forget that. No, I will rather keep my slight heartache and write to you often. And now many thanks, and many sincere remembrances to your parents. To your dear sister many hundred —what I would gladly give

<sup>1</sup> *Der junge Goethe*, i. 243-5. *An Mamsell F.* Immediately after the point at which the above quotation stops is this chronologically important sentence :—"dass ich kaum angelangt bin als ich schon hier sitze und an Sie schreibe." October 14, 1770, was a Sunday.—Tr.



you again.”<sup>1</sup> We have only the sketch of this letter ; for none of the many which he afterwards wrote to Sessenheim was a preliminary sketch needful ! These letters are lost to us. Friederike’s elder sister, in chagrin, burnt them all at a later time.

Meanwhile many new-comers joined the Lauth *table d’hôte*, the number of those who surrounded the table rose from a dozen to about twenty. Among these new-comers was Heinrich Jung, called Stilling, who entered the University on the 18th of September (1770). Jung was now thirty years of age, and his fortunes had been remarkable. Charcoal-burner, tailor, tutor, schoolmaster, help in a business establishment in turn, it was at last revealed to him that his Heavenly Father had been preparing him for the study of medicine by sharp and weary trial from his youth up. After six years’ endeavour to learn all that medical books could teach, he at length made up his mind to enter a regular medical school—and this brought him to Strassburg—though he had no means, and had betrothed himself to a girl poor as himself ; his support was in the motto *Jehovah jireh*—the Lord will provide. And he was not put to shame for having thus made God his paymaster. Wolfgang felt a sincere sympathy with this earnest man whom it was so easy to make fun of ; he won Jung’s heart completely by the noble decision with which he brushed away the cheap ridicule which a witling made of Jung’s wig. Such a sincere belief in miracles, such a direct reference always to God as the pole-star of life, were met by Wolfgang with that respect which he already gave to like peculiarities in Fräulein Klettenberg and other pious friends ; from whom, indeed, at this time he was not far removed. Jung’s earnestness won Wolfgang, and in their scientific aspirations they found many points of union, for just at this time Wolfgang was about to widen his

<sup>1</sup> *Der junge Goethe*, i. 245-247.

field of knowledge by attending lectures in natural science and medicine. Thus he went with Jung to the elder Spielmann's chemistry class, and to Lobstein's anatomy class; he heard Ehrmann's clinical lectures, and even studied midwifery under the younger Ehrmann, not being deterred by the high fee of six new louis d'ors. And another fostering cause of his intimacy with Jung was their fellowship in attendance in Herder's sick-chamber.

Since we last saw Herder he had taken new lodgings, the prince having departed; and in these lodgings his next room neighbour was a Russian medical student,<sup>1</sup> cousin of a Riga acquaintance. This Russian (who matriculated on November 13) stood faithfully by Herder in the operation, and during the weary after-time of suffering. The operation—the bone of the nose had to be drilled—was performed on October 21 (1770); a painful treatment followed, involving long confinement to the sick-room, and alas! the hoped-for result did not take place. During this dreary time Herder was to be seen by hardly any one but his Russian, Wolfgang, who came every morning and evening, and Jung. That all these, but especially Wolfgang, who revealed his feelings and enthusiasms so unreservedly, often suffered a good deal from Herder's easily roused bitterness, was a matter of course. But Wolfgang felt the extraordinary value of that deep insight, of that comprehensive knowledge, and aspired to turn these things to account for his own mental enlargement; nor could it escape his notice that Herder, scold as he might, did yet estimate the gifts of his young friend at a high rate. Thus was he enabled to endure.

At this time, beside researches on the First Book of Moses which led deep into the History of the East, Herder's chief preoccupations were Shakespeare, Ossian, the Psalms,

<sup>1</sup> Named Peglow.—TR.

and Klopstock ; and in the main these were the subjects of his conversation. So soon, however, as he was in any degree fit for original work, he with speed completed his long prepared Prize Essay on the Origin of Language, which had to be sent to Berlin before the close of the year. Goethe, reading it in manuscript, learned a great deal, for he had not yet thought on the question with which it dealt. The proposition which Herder works out to such irresistible demonstration, that God had not been a direct teacher of language in paradise, but rather had given to man the powers by which he might develop a language, this proposition thoroughly fell in with Wolfgang's view that the growth of all things was according to natural laws. He talked with unreserved animation on this subject, and indeed on all that came uppermost, not escaping frequent sharp sarcastic correction. Herder was especially fond of Goldsmith's *Vicar of Wakefield*, which he perused again and again ; the German version he would read aloud to his friends in the easy quiet way peculiar to him, from which every trace of declamatory fervour was banished. Even here his bitter remarks found occasion, now in the outbreaks of feeling of the listeners, now in their want of acuteness as to the course of the story or its beauty. Wolfgang was the more captivated by the *Vicar* because the family in it reminded him forcibly of his Sessenheim friends.

The correspondence with Friederike meanwhile briskly ran its course ; probably there were often little gifts and *perhaps* another visit. There was a letter in December 1770 to friend Horn, which Goethe himself thought worthy of preservation. Here, according to Eckermann's account,<sup>1</sup> are already traces of *Werther* ; the Sessenheim relation is accomplished, the happy youth seems to be lulled in a delirium of the sweetest emotions, loitering away his days as

<sup>1</sup> Eckermann, April 11, 1829.—TR.

in a dream; the perfect content of the happiness is indicated even in the smooth neat and elegant handwriting. Two little poems, which have been preserved, are addressed to the two sisters, and refer—one to a visit soon to be paid despite the harshness of winter,<sup>1</sup> another to an evening ride from Sessenheim, performing the commission of the girls.<sup>2</sup> He probably visited the parsonage at Christmas, and probably he then gave Friederike the book of songs which he made by putting his own words to well-known airs.

In the beginning of the year 1771 Herder's discontent at the absence of the promised result of the operation reached such a pitch that "he began to stamp" (*zu pochen anfang*). He applied to the most famous surgeon in Strassburg, Busch, whose operations seemed at first successful; but at the beginning of spring it appeared that "after all pains, expenses, exhaustions, negligences, uneasiness, and mortifications,"<sup>3</sup> the treatment had failed, all hope was gone, nay, perhaps dangerous consequences were to be feared. If in this sad time Herder's letters to his bride even were cold and "discordant," how much must Wolfgang and Jung have suffered, the constant eye-witnesses of his dreadful need! But they steadfastly endured the fretfulness, the bitterness, the contemptuous ridicule of the man whom they revered and pitied, from whose mind such store of living thoughts, of penetrating insight, of rich knowledge, was lavishly poured. The story of the human race which tells of all nations—what each might have been, what destiny each has actually had, how each has found a happiness after its own fashion, and at

<sup>1</sup> *Der junge Goethe*, i. 266. — "Ich komme bald, ihr goldnen Kinder."—Tr.

<sup>2</sup> *Der junge Goethe*, i. 263. — "Nun sitzt der Ritter an dem Ort, Den ihr ihm nanntet liebe Kinder."—Tr.

<sup>3</sup> From a letter of Herder's to Caroline Flachsland, spring 1771.—Tr.

the same time how the nations, following one on other, have in turn taken up and continued the great progressive development of humanity—how radiant clear did Herder make this! It was a special pleasure to him to speak his thoughts on plastic art, which he considered the art for the sense of touch, as opposed to painting, the art for the sight. Goethe remembered at a later time that he often said that sight was everything with Goethe. In poetry Herder condemned all elaboration, and accordingly Wolfgang's favourite Ovid fared ill; the Greeks he set above all others, and among them the greatness of Homer. He said indeed, later, that with Goethe beginning his study of Homer in Strassburg, Homer's heroes seemed all conceived as beautiful great storks freely wading about; he still thinks of Goethe when he comes on one of those excellent passages where the Father of Poetry peeps over his lyre and smiles in his venerable beard. As the greatest Poet of the North Shakespeare was extolled; his dramas are leaves from the Book of Events—of Providence—of the World—fluttering across the storm of Time. In front of Shakespeare's picture he often embraced the poet-lad, into whom he, as it were, desired to transfuse his whole admiration of one, who, spurning all the lumber of dramatic rules, unities, and such like, sets man and nature before us with large and generous portrayal. The strange old world of Ossian too Herder revealed to the younger friend, teaching him to recognise the powerful popular spirit which breathes in this poet. He pointed out with enthusiasm that the gold of genuine poesy is the general dower of the human spirit; is to be found—not in the old Scottish ballad alone—in the popular song of every country, not excluding even Lapland; and he would then urge Wolfgang to search out what might still live among the peasants of Elsass. Among modern literatures he especially loved English: Sterne, Swift, Richardson, and Fielding, were



his favourite English authors. In French Literature he could, on the other hand, see nothing but decline—the feebleness of old age; even Rousseau with all his greatness was yet the Frenchman, intent on seeming; of all French books he most abhorred the *Système de la nature*.

These remarks on France had the more weight with Wolfgang, as Herder, made for the thorough comprehension of a national character, had himself been in France, and knew personally many of her living men of name. That in Strassburg Goethe so decidedly turned away from the power of France has for most essential cause the influence of Herder; though indeed the idle pride and haughtiness of *La grande nation*—there were plentiful instances in Strassburg—contributed to the same result.

In German Literature, beside Klopstock, Herder esteemed above all Gessner; but he did not deny Winckelmann, Lessing, Wieland, Gleim, Gerstenberg, and others. Wolfgang's own efforts found little favour with him, and so the young poet grew guarded in his confidences on that head.

He indeed kept secret from Herder many other things; his dabbings in alchemy, his mystic piety, his collection of seals, and of course, especially secret, his love for Friederike. For every little weakness that emerged in social intercourse Herder had his small stinging arrow of sarcasm; he ridiculed Wolfgang's hobbies, and would not let pass uncorrected any extravagant or groundless piece of criticism. Though Wolfgang knew to divide the just blame from the bitterness of a sick mind, yet he probably did not always good-humouredly swallow the dose. When about the close of this year (1771) Herder had given a public chastisement to a voluminous book-maker of the day, Wolfgang wrote quite frankly that though the scribbler's chastisement had given him pleasure it was pleasure mingled with the hound's reminiscence of old

floggings ; old wales had itched, as do recently healed wounds when the weather changes.<sup>1</sup> Such cruel harshness would have overcome the most enduring patience, had not Herder at times put it off for very loveable moods. In this memorable friendship the direction of Wolfgang's thoughts acquired a bent altogether new, though quite accordant with his nature ; even in Herder's handwriting he felt a certain magic power.

With Salzmann, and with those younger friends, Wolfgang meanwhile kept up a constant and animated intercourse, and there was no lack of social amusements. The concerts were a great pleasure. During the Strassburg period he learned to play the violoncello ; Salzmann loved music, and one of his *table d'hôte* associates, the somewhat devil-may-care and mocking medical student Meyer, was enthusiastic about music and song, even wrote a comic opera. There were in Strassburg two theatres ; one French, one German. At the former Wolfgang saw at this time—if not earlier, in spring or in summer—the actor Aufresne, who with great success strove after the highest truth and genuine nature in his playing of tragedy ; and thus having broken with the dramatic art, as delivered to that age by the age of the classic writers, he found that Paris would not accept him more ; he must go to foreign places for acknowledgment. Wolfgang had the delight of witnessing several important performances of the great actor. That Aufresne had met with such opposition in Paris, was a fresh proof how little nature and truth were valued in France.

Beside natural science, and medicine, we find him studying the antiquities of Elsass, to which Niederbronn first prompted him. Schöpflin's *Alsatia illustrata* led him to Oberlin's description of the Museum Schoepflinianum, and to this museum itself ; he was allowed by Professors Oberlin and Koch—both friends of Salzmann—to visit it again and again.

<sup>1</sup> *Der junge Goethe*, i. 302-4.—TR.

The endeavours of these two men to win him for Strassburg and the French service must have at least begun at this time. But they were unsuccessful. Herder's earnestly expressed conviction of the decadence of French literature; French political discord so often forced on one's notice—a discord which made German affairs seem at least tolerable; Goethe's own steadfast desire for wider culture, and for a poetic activity possible only in his mother-tongue; last, his love for his German Fatherland—all contributed to make him put away the tempting offer; even the prospect, did he accept, of being summoned to the German Office at Versailles overcame him not. Another matter which must have occupied his attention at this time was the Disputation needful for his Doctor's degree. He had at length made up his mind to maintain the thesis that the State is not merely justified in fixing a form of religion to which all must adhere, but bound to do so.

Through all this manifold activity, all this eager and stirring course of life, wound the golden thread of his Sessenheim love. It was a bliss to which he had yet been strange; for Käthchen's bright personality had possessed rather his fancy than his soul, and that while he was yet unripened. Then Käthchen had given him up, and he clung to her with a sort of love-sick obstinacy; while here the clear voice of like soul yearning after like soul guided him along. During the first three months of the new year (1771) the correspondence continued to grow constantly more affectionate. Wolfgang probably also visited the parsonage once. It is highly probable that he went at Easter (31st March); in that neighbourhood Easter Monday was marked by great family gatherings. Probably then this Easter Monday witnessed that merrymaking at which Wolfgang "won Friederike's heart in play,"<sup>1</sup> and kissed

<sup>1</sup> "Jetzt fühlt der Engel was ich fühle,  
Ihr Herz gewann ich mir beim Spiele,

her for the first time. At her kiss he thrilled with the glowing certainty that she loved him ; but it seems as if even then there arose within him the foreboding of his possible faithlessness : for in verses written immediately after, he begs Destiny to let him be to-morrow of the same mind as he is to-day, and to teach him to be worthy of her.<sup>1</sup> It remains uncertain whether this was the day on which the tablet with the names of the family and the guests was hung up on one of the four beautiful beeches in the little wood called "Grove of Nightingales" (*Nachtigallenwäldel*). On this tablet Goethe set his own name last, and wrote in verse his desire that if any name is to grow marred it may be his own.<sup>2</sup> These lines Friederike's sister knew by heart so late as 1835.

Immediately after Easter (1771) Herder left for Bückeburg. Whether Wolfgang returned to Strassburg to say good-bye, or stayed in Sessenheim for the pastor's birthday, April 10th, we do not know. Shortly after, probably, falls that visit of the *Pastorin* with her two daughters to Strassburg relatives, of which there is a full account in *Dichtung und Wahrheit*. Friederike and Wolfgang went together on walks in the neigh-

Und sie ist nun von Herzen mein.  
Du gabst mir, Schicksal, diese Freude,  
Nun lass auch Morgen seyn wie Heute,  
Und lehr' mich ihrer würdig seyn."

*Der junge Goethe*, i. 263.—TR.

<sup>1</sup> See the lines just quoted.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> "Dem Himmel wach's entgegen  
Der Baum, der Erde Stolz.  
Ihr Wetter, Stürm' und Regen,  
Verschont das heil'ge Holz !

Und soll ein Name verderben  
So nehmt die obern in Acht !  
Es mag der Dichter sterben,  
Der diesen Reim gemacht.

*Der junge Goethe*, i. 270.—TR.

bourhood, during one of which he cut their names on a tree. After her departure for home he felt extremely unhappy; especially because in her leave-taking her girl-friends had seemed of more account than he.

When Herder was gone Jung pressed more close than ever to Wolfgang, who made him know Shakespeare, Ossian, Sterne and Fielding, and induced him to go to the theatre on the 9th of May, when Frau Abt played Julie in Weisse's *Romeo und Julie*, in which part Wolfgang had seen Caroline Schulze at Leipzig. Soon after Jung had to be comforted about an unsuccessful literary endeavour of his—so we learn from one of Goethe's letters to Herder, the date of which is fixed by a reference in it to the *Julie*.<sup>1</sup> Jung was thrown into painful anxiety by news which came on the 14th that his betrothed was seriously ill. How sympathising Wolfgang was at this time; how he packed his friend's valise, and procured him travelling necessities, and had them taken to the Rhine boat, finally parting with tears, Jung himself has told us!

Before Whitsuntide (the 19th of May 1771) Wolfgang—just then troubled with a cough—went to Sessenheim, whence he had had word that Friederike was ill. He found her still poorly; but could not help promising to the elder sister to go with her to a dance on Whit Monday. From two in the afternoon until midnight he danced almost without interval with her. "I forgot my feverishness," he writes to Salzmann; "and since then it has been really better. You should have been a looker-on at least; the whole Me sunk in dancing."<sup>2</sup>

He found himself detained in Sessenheim longer than he had intended, as he could not leave the invalid. He had already perceived how great a mischief he was to be cause of, having roused in Friederike's soul desires and claims which he could

<sup>1</sup> *Der junge Goethe*, i. 257.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* i. 252-3.—TR.



never satisfy. If he had at first quite abandoned himself to the sweet ecstasy of loving her, he now had wakened from his dream of delight to survey the matter with cold and deliberate prudence; he saw that he must renounce his beloved in order to save his own happiness—and with it hers—from shipwreck. Already, when he saw Friederike in the city, he had been compelled to acknowledge that she seemed out of her place; now he was forced on the thought that, should his father accept this rustic daughter-in-law—a most unlikely thing—she would in the dignified austere Frankfurt home but lead a life of constraint and unhappiness. This being granted, he must, in order to make her happy, leave his father and set up on his own account. But how was he to do this? he had never regarded law as more than a secondary episodic part of the business of life; he had never thought of earning his bread by it; his serious endeavour had always been to further his own development and his creative literary activity. And like a warning wraith to dissuade him from such a course, arose the thought of all his good father's plans slain by his cruel indifference. In this strait, to which his heedlessness had brought him, he gave up the happiness of his heart to save his intellectual development—ininitely painful as it was to sacrifice with his own happiness that of the tender sick girl who loved him, and who, he felt, could never belong to any other. It was a hard struggle. From the first there was no doubt of the issue; but still it was hard. Eight years later, Goethe told Frau von Stein that Friederike had loved him more beautifully than he had deserved;<sup>1</sup> which reminds us of his observation elsewhere that women love more beautifully than men. While the former listen only to the voice of the heart, man is actuated by the impulse to gain free develop-

<sup>1</sup> Goethe to Frau von Stein: Emmendingen; Tuesday, 28th September 1779.—Tr.

ment, to protect his full unmutilated life. Twenty years later, Goethe makes the Princess complain to Tasso :—

“Wir sind von keinem Männerherzen sicher  
Das noch so warm sich einmal uns ergab.”<sup>1</sup>

Wolfgang with bleeding heart gave up Friederike that he might not lose himself. It was his first great renunciation—in truth a tragic one ; for one of the noblest women—one worthy of the highest happiness—was almost heart-broken by it.

From four letters to Salzmann still preserved we learn about this stay at Sessenheim, which lasted more than four weeks. “For the honour of our Lord God I do not leave this place just at present,” he writes in the second week after Whitsuntide. It is impossible to leave his beloved in her illness, however dreary and bitter staying has become. “The atmosphere of the place is not very clear, the little one continues sadly ill, and that makes everything seem awry. Not to forget the *conscia mens*, and alas ! Not *recti*, which plagues me. Yet there is ever land.” He finds, at any rate, a certain calm in seeing Friederike, while were he far from her his mind would be tossing in uneasy care. Then he begs Salzmann to send him a couple of pounds of sweets, which will make sweet mouths, sweeter than the faces around have been for some time.<sup>2</sup> On June 5 he writes :—“Here I am tight and fast ;” my cough continues ; I am indeed pretty well in other respects, still one is but half alive when unable to fetch one’s breath. And yet I will not go to town. The exercise and fresh air do one good as far as anything does good, not to reckon——” Here he breaks off, not venturing to name the real cause of his detention. “The world is so fair ! so fair !” he goes on,

<sup>1</sup> Tasso, ii. 1.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> *Der junge Goethe*, i. 252.—TR.

<sup>3</sup> “Hier sitz ich zwischen Thür und Angel ”—“Here I sit between door and hinge.” *Der junge Goethe*, i. 253.—TR.

“ could one but enjoy it ! I am often peevish when I think of this, and often deliver to myself most edifying discourses on the *to-day*, on that doctrine ” (the *Carpe diem* doctrine), “ so indispensable for our happiness, yet which many a professor of ethics never grasped, and which none expounds well.” It was a dreary pursuit of shadows this life that he for more than four weeks led in Sessenheim ; an expiation, as it were, of his former careless walking. Where now was the glad rapture which once at Friederike’s side had lifted him to heaven ? If he had not yet distinctly said that his return home was to put an end to the alliance, his silence as to any prospect of marriage spoke as effectively as the restraint which he now put on his manner. It might well seem strange to the Sessenheim folk, and to the friendly callers at the parsonage, that the young student should stay so long, and still nothing said of marriage ; that his health needed the country air was but a lame excuse.

Meanwhile Wolfgang provided many kinds of entertainment, and made himself useful in general. Thus he painted the pastor’s coach, which old friend, eight years after, he found still in existence,<sup>1</sup> he cobbled (*künstelte*) many things with the help of a neighbour, and the plan of a rebuilt parsonage belongs to this period. He was on friendly terms with the villagers. He is said to have amused himself by learning basket-weaving at this time. In fact he busied himself in all sorts of ways, probably with his Dissertation among the rest. He diligently read Homer in the edition which Herder recommended ; he was at last able to get on almost wholly without a translation (that which he used being the Latin one in Clarke’s edition). As afterwards he used to read Homer aloud in free extempore rendering to his sister, so did he now read to the Sessenheim sisters—sometimes to Friederike alone

<sup>1</sup> See the letter to Frau von Stein indicated above.—TR.

—especially the most powerful passages. He translated Ossian's affecting *Songs of Selma*, which he read with a fervour which spoke his own pain, then giving his translation to Friederike. He also gave her a copy of *Die Mitschuldigen*. In her song album he wrote a great deal. He hunted after what fragments of native song might still linger in Sessenheim and the region around. Whether Friederike herself sang any such remains a matter of doubt. When she at last got well there were many excursions and walks by her side in the lovely country, then very lovely indeed through the continuance of fair weather. On one fine morning he spoke in an exquisite song his impatience that Friederike, after having promised to go to the Grove of Nightingales with him, now kept him waiting over long.<sup>1</sup>

From Strassburg, meanwhile, came from Salzmann and others calls to return, nor can he have failed to get from home many exhortations to proceed with the business of the degree. But it was hard to leave the spot where lived she who was dearest in the world to him, who through him had become so happy, and now was to have that happiness shattered. Even at the end of the fourth week, about the 15th of June (1771), he cannot man himself to the needful resolve. "I am coming, or I am not coming, or—I will know all about it better when it is done than now," he writes to Salzmann in extremest agitation. "Rain without and rain within, and the rude winds of evening rattle in the vine leaves round the window, and my *animula vagula*" (my poor wavering soul), "is like the weather-cock yonder on the church tower; 'turn again and turn again,' so the day wears; though 'bow thyself and stretch thyself'" (calmer movements) "have been long quite out of use." Then he adds mockingly that should he grow girl-natured and forget his stops it will not seem at all

<sup>1</sup> *Der junge Goethe*, i. 261. "Erwache Friederike."—TR.

strange. His deep regret that he could not lead the chosen of his heart to his father's house speaks in the emotional close :—  
“God guard for me my dear parents, God guard my dear sister, God guard my dear Notary, and all kind hearts. Amen !”<sup>1</sup>  
May one guess that a warning word had been spoken by his sister, who might have heard through Horn of his Sessenheim love, and have put before him the consequences of such a union. Not long after, perhaps on the 18th June (1771), he begs Salzmann to give the female bearer of his letter a louis d'or ; he is stuck fast in Sessenheim for want of money, not having provided for such a long stay. Even yet he cannot leave the dear circle, however sternly he wills it. “What can willing it do when opposed to the faces I see around. The state of my heart is strange, and my health halts after its old fashion through the world, which is lovelier than I have seen it for a long time. The most charming country, people who love me, a round of joys.” Thus he sees all the dreams of his youth fulfilled, but he is not one hair's-breadth happier. “The appendix ! the appendix ! with which destiny always supplements our good things !”<sup>2</sup> The appendix is, of course, the torturing consciousness that he must renounce his heart's desire, and destroy the happiness of Friederike. Immediately after this, perhaps on the 20th, just before the midsummer holidays, he tore himself away.

Into Strassburg just then pressed—his head full of intrigues and wild fancies, not without considerable poetic gift—the Livonian, Jakob Lenz, about a year and a half younger than Wolfgang. Desiring to see the world, and to play his part, he had defied the will of his relatives and joined himself to the two eldest sons of a nobleman of Courland, a Herr von Kleist, who wished to take military service in Elsass ; they gave Lenz free bed and board and occasional presents, but no fixed

<sup>1</sup> *Der junge Goethe*, i. 249-50.—Tr.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* i. 250-1.—Tr.



income. Through the *Deutsche Gesellschaft* he had become intimate with Salzmann, and being a good listener had been told of the love distraction of Goethe, now so long detained in Sessenheim. To Lenz nothing could be more alluring than the notion of captivating the gifted Frankfurter whose unhappy love affair made him so much more interesting. A very attractive presence was that of this new-comer to Strassburg—a lovely little head, pleasant though somewhat snub features, an agreeable but not quite fluent mode of speech, a manner timid with a child's reserve, such were one's first impressions. With all his true-hearted loveableness and trustfulness, dashed with crackbrained frolicsomeness, he threw himself into the arms of Wolfgang, now in a mood very accessible to earnest friendliness. A close alliance grew between them, cemented to a most perdurable toughness by Lenz's poetic endowment and enthusiastic admiration for Shakespeare. He delighted in strange pranks, and was furnished with an inexhaustible stock of notions and rhymes.<sup>1</sup> Wolfgang, followed about by the tender-hearted Lenz as by his own shadow, felt inseparably bound to one in whom, through all his wild behaviour, he recognised an aspiration and effort like his own. They often went together to the inn at the *Wasserzoll*, beside the river Ill, where the lindens were witnesses of their most intimate confidences. The road to Sessenheim ran by.

Soon after, too, Jung came back; he had during his absence married his Christine, still an invalid, by the bedside. "His first visit was to Goethe," he tells us himself. "The noble fellow leaped up when he saw who came, fell on his neck and kissed him. 'Here you are again, good Stilling!' he cried, 'and how goes it with your maiden?' Stilling answered, 'She is no longer my maiden, she is now my wife.'

<sup>1</sup> Goethe thought the English word *whimsical* the best word to describe Lenz's mind.—TR.

‘That is well done,’ answered the other; ‘thou art an excellent young fellow.’<sup>1</sup> That half day they spent altogether in friendly conversation and stories. The well-known gentle Lenz was by this time also of the party. . . . Goethe, Lenz, Lersé, and Stilling, formed a circle in which any one would feel happy who can feel what is beautiful and good.”

The Doctor’s Dissertation was now quickly brought to a close and transcribed; we only know the beginning of the title: *De Legislatore*. One copy went to his father, the other to the faculty. But the faculty would not permit to be printed an essay which quite ignored Christian Revelation, and treated Religion merely as an institution. Great offence also was given by the assertion that what stood on the Tables of the Law was not the Ten Commandments. If, as *Dichtung und Wahrheit* asserts, Wolfgang, from disinclination to see himself in print, really designed to have his treatise rejected, he could have chosen no better way. The Dean Reisseisen acknowledged the thoroughness and acuteness of the author, to whom the faculty would give the licentiate degree if he would maintain some theses by disputation. Nothing could have been more welcome to Goethe. So a great number of theses, many of the most general character, were huddled together and printed. The public Disputation came off on the 6th of August, and everything went tolerably. Lersé was one of the opponents chosen, and he beset the licentiate *in spe* so hard that the latter, in the best humour, clapped his hand on his sword and called out in German, “I think, brother, you would like to be my Hector.” That Wolfgang, with his energetic sharply pronounced personality, was not a very great favourite in Strassburg, is nothing to surprise us. In letters of that time he is called a man of genius, but also of unbearable arrogance, an over-witty fellow of *half-knowledge*, a deranged

<sup>1</sup> “Du bist ein excellenter Junge:” a pun on Jung.—TR.

mock at religion; always a splinter too much or too little. Meyer of Lindau speaks of him to Salzmann as "that foolish Goethe" (*den närrischen Goethe*)—this however is in direct reference to his love affair.

After taking his degree Wolfgang seems, in the company of some friends, to have made that trip on horseback to the southern limits of Elsass which is mentioned in *Dichtung und Wahrheit*. Between Colmar and Schlettstadt resounded "waggish hymns to Ceres" ("*possierliche Hymnen an Ceres*"), in which even the question of free trade was discussed. It is hard not to feel certain that Lenz was one of the party. On this journey, too, Wolfgang must have hunted after Alsatian popular ballads. Later he writes to Herder that "on his peregrinations" in Elsass he had dragged a dozen ballads from the throats of the old grandmothers; the grandchildren had no song except, "Ich liebte nur Ismenen."<sup>1</sup>

Just before or after this excursion must have arrived that "Hellebore-letter" (*Niesewurzbrief*), in which the young fellow who would be too fond is made feel how humble he ought to be before Herder, and has indicated to him all that there is yet to do before firm sufficiency to himself be attained. "My whole Me is shaken," wrote Wolfgang in the first burst of emotion. "Apollo of the Belvedere, why dost thou show thyself to us in thy nakedness, that we must humble ourselves before thee! Spanish costume and paint!" He begs Herder to remain to him what he is now. Gladly will he, if unable to strike out a path for himself, follow his friend as the friendly moon accompanies the earth. Still his vivid consciousness of worth breaks forth with all energy in the words: "But this—take it home to you—I would rather be Mercury, last, and, what is more, smallest of the seven, to circle with you round *one* sun, than first among the five who own the influence of

<sup>1</sup> *Der junge Goethe*, i. 297.—TR.

Saturn." He will not loose his grasp of Herder, even though, like Jacob with the angel of the Lord, he wrestle until he be weary.<sup>1</sup> The fiery youth would not have borne with these bitter words had he not felt that they were not wholly undeserved, and that he owed much to that ripe judgment and that cultivated taste.

In a life of intimate union with friends after his own heart, he tried to forget his sorrow and his wrong-doing. He thought of writing a drama, *Julius Cæsar*; a couple of prose passages intended for it are to be found at the end of the *Ephemerides*.<sup>2</sup> It may be conjectured that Aufresne's large, free presentation of heroic characters had wakened in him the old ambition to write tragedy. But he seems about this time to have dashed off a comic opera also; for when he writes to Jung from Frankfurt, begging that "the opera the *Mondo alla riversa*" be returned to him, he cannot mean *Die Mitschuldigen*.<sup>3</sup> This must rather have been a treatment of the theme A Harlequin's Adventures in Wonderland, like Ulrich König's adaptation (1725) *Le monde renversé*, which was probably from an Italian source. Rather may we find *Die Mitschuldigen* referred to in the *Comædia* which, a couple of months before, he had begged Salzmann to get back for him "from O-Ferol, or the person, whoever he may be, that has it." Salzmann is to send it to Herr H—— (?), addressed to Goethe, and sealed.<sup>4</sup>

But all these distractions failed to make him forget Friederike. Once again he must see her, to take personal leave. To this the following note to Salzmann, relates:—"My eyelids are falling with weariness; it is only nine. A

<sup>1</sup> *Der junge Goethe*, i. 259.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> Schöll: *Briefe und Aufsätze*, 137-140.—TR.

<sup>3</sup> A letter to Jung enclosed in one to Salzmann, dated February 3, 1772. *Der junge Goethe*, i. 305-6.—TR.

<sup>4</sup> Goethe to Salzmann, November 28, 1771. *Der junge Goethe*, i. 300-302.—TR.

strange disposed time! Last night full of excitement; early this morning chased from bed by plans." (Plans relating to Friederike?) "Oh! there is in my head the same disorder that there is in my room; I cannot even find a scrap of paper but this blue kind. Yet any paper is good to say to you that I love you, and this doubly good; you know what I had meant it for." (For the envelope of a letter of farewell to Friederike.) "Be merry until I see you again. I am not quite cheerful; I am too much awake not to feel that I am catching at shadows" (for he still would fain win his beloved). "And yet, at seven in the morning my horse is saddled, and then—adieu!"<sup>1</sup> The pain of the final leave-taking must have been very great. He himself felt that he was deeply to blame; but Friederike in all her desolation uttered no reproach.

During the very last days in Strassburg the poet's union with the city grew by chance closer still through the cathedral; on the platform of which he so often, amid a circle of friends, had greeted the departing sun with brimming goblets; where too he had chiselled his name on the right corner post at the south-eastern spiral staircase. One day, in a considerable company at a country-house near Strassburg, the talk fell on the cathedral. They had a fine view of the front, with the one tower lifting itself high above. Somebody remarking what a pity it was that the other tower had not been built, Goethe expressed with his usual vivacity his conviction that even the tower already there was not finished; above the four spiral staircases ought to be four light pinnacles. To his joy the organ-builder Silbermann, who was present, assured him that the original sketches, still preserved, confirmed what he had said. His request to have these shown to him before his departure was granted, and he traced on transparent paper the forms of the four pinnacles unbuilt.

<sup>1</sup> Goethe to Salzmann (August? 1771). *Der junge Goethe*, i. 254.—  
Tr.



That personal leave-taking had not contributed to banish the memory of Friederike, and he was impelled to utter his yearning in verses written on a gloomy morning of one of the last Strassburg days and immediately sent to Sessenheim.<sup>1</sup> No light thing either was the parting from his friends—especially Salzmann, Lerse, Lenz, and Jung. “To Lerse, my worthy friend and Shakespeare’s, in never-ending remembrance,” so runs the inscription subscribed by him in a copy of *Othello*. Lerse wrote underneath:—“May my heart be ever thine, dear Goethe.” At that time, too, he wrote in Lenz’s album these verses:—

“ Zur Erinnerung guter Stunden,  
Aller Freuden, aller Wunden,  
Aller Sorgen, aller Schmerzen  
In zwei tollen Dichterherzen,  
Noch im letzten Augenblick  
Lass’ ich Lenzen das zurück.”

On the 23d of August he could depart with the glad consciousness of leaving behind him many true hearts; but his lightness in love had wrecked the happiness of the fairest and dearest of all.

On his return journey he stopped at Mannheim to see the museum of casts from the antique; where before him Herder had spent two whole days of enjoyment, gaining therein new insight on the subject of Plastic Art. The statues made a grand and fruitful impression on Goethe, which did not let him rest until he had a small collection of casts of his own. The Laokoon especially fettered his attention, and he agreed with Herder and Winckelmann against Lessing that the father does not shriek; he thought that the serpent-attacked abdomen is so contracted that shrieking is impossible. This

<sup>1</sup> *Der junge Goethe*, i. 268: “Ein grauer trüber Morgen Bedeckt mein liebes Feld.”—Tr.

view he promulgated more than a quarter of a century later.<sup>1</sup> He wrote a letter on these matters to Oeser, not, however, entering with any particularity on this theory of his own. Now that the loss of Kätchen was forgotten in a deeper grief, he could again think of that Leipzig from which he had so long turned away his face.

Of the grandeur of ancient architecture he had a foretaste when he saw a cast of a capital from the Pantheon, and the vast beautiful acanthus leaves made him somewhat waver in his faith in Gothic Art.<sup>2</sup> Fifteen years later he recalls in Venice this deep impression.<sup>3</sup>

Thus from Strassburg he returned much stronger than from Leipzig; if not a doctor he was yet a licentiate; but on his soul there was a heavy burden. However he had known what pure and beautiful love is, and through Herder he had been consecrate a German poet, with his work proceeding from the depth of the spirit, and from genuine feeling and seeing.

<sup>1</sup> More exactly, he promulgates this view:—That neither of the sons is yet bitten (the younger son's exhaustion to be explained by compression in the serpent's coils); and that the whole attitude of the father is only comprehensible if we consider him as bitten at the very moment here chosen by the sculptor. Goethe's essay *Ueber Laokoon* appeared in the *Propyläen*, I. i. 1798.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, xi. Buch (*last page or two*).—TR.

<sup>3</sup> *Die Italiänische Reise*, October 8, 1786. He had by that time quite made up his mind:—"Diese" (Gothic Art) "bin ich nun, Gott sey Dank, auf ewig los." The love for Gothic Art had been lately awakened by the great Cathedral of Strassburg, of the influence of which on Goethe Herr Düntzer perhaps does not tell us enough. Note later on the influence of Cologne Cathedral.—TR.



BOOK III.

ADVOCATE AND POET

1771—1775





## CHAPTER I.

INTERVAL SPENT IN FRANKFURT BETWEEN THE STRASSBURG  
AND WETZLAR PERIODS.

AUGUST 1771—MAY 1772.

MOTHER and sister received Wolfgang with perfect love, and his father was heartily glad to see him back again so bright and well, and qualified at last to begin a life of regular professional activity. Grandfather Textor had died in February (1771).<sup>1</sup> On Wolfgang's birthday (August 28, 1771)—he had probably reached Frankfurt the day before—he sent to the Chief-Magistrate and Sheriffs his "*most dutiful beseeching petition, that these honourable sirs would most graciously be pleased to admit him to the number of so-called Advocatorum ordinariorum,*" in order that he might "*thereby prepare himself for the weightier duties which it might please a high, authoritative, and venerable magistracy of its high will and pleasure to require of him.*" In the latter paragraph do we not see the hand of his father? His admission followed on the 31st of August. Three days later Wolfgang took the advocate and burgher oath before his old friend the senior Bürgermeister von Olenschlager.

There was no thought of any considerable amount of lawyer work at present. Such work, consisting in the drawing

<sup>1</sup> See Wolfgang's letter to grandmother Textor on this event, *Der junge Goethe*, i. 247-9.—TR.

up of legal documents, the ordering and administration of affairs of property, quite wanted any charm which might be found in public appearances, and it would have been interrupted by a contemplated half-year's stay at Wetzlar, which was to begin at Easter 1772. Through his uncle Textor, who, elected a councillor in this month (August 1771), had to give up his business as lawyer, he got only *one* case. Not even one came through his close connection with J. G. Schlosser, nor through Schlosser's brother, Dr. Hieronymus Peter Schlosser. The latter was in his thirty-seventh year, an extremely refined man, skilled in Latin verse, steadfast, wise, learned ; in his ten years' practice as legal adviser he had won every one's trust. Only two cases were entrusted to our young advocate during the first seven months. In the first his friend Dr. Moors represented a plaintiff father, Wolfgang the defendant son. On the 16th of October he made his first memorial. He was severe on the "*big-talking, dull, text-bookish, schoolroom wisdom*" of the father's bill of complaint, on the "*most commonplace rules of an undigested legal dogma ;*" he ridiculed a pair of "*absurd mice of text-book definitions which, indeed, bore witness to their mother ;*" but he was especially severe in demanding that an example should be made of the plaintiffs, who had assailed the sacred person of a judge, "*one of the most venerable elders of the city.*" To pay him back friend Moors called him an incipient advocate, the sworn foe of actual grounds of evidence, one who seemed to have for friends and colleagues witty young hares, one who let out-mice which he ought to have had caught by his legal tom-cat ; adding that he was ignorant of law. Wolfgang's reply is dated March 30, 1772. In the judgment delivered on April 22, in favour of the son, both advocates were "*seriously reprimanded for their unseemly violence of tone, the issue of which could only be to embitter the already enraged clients.*"

The second case, the one in which the defence was transferred from the shoulders of uncle Textor to those of Wolfgang, was an action against the exchequer; the first memorial was presented on the 6th of November (1771), and the opposing party handed in its defence on the 10th of February 1772. The documents were then sent to the Faculty at Tübingen.

This limited professional business Goethe could, as he writes to Salzmann,<sup>1</sup> master in spare hours, and the more easily since his father carefully went through the documents with him and talked them over, and then he had a practised scribe, Liebholdt, at his side. It was only needful to set forth the circumstances skilfully, and to dismiss the arguments of the opposite side, mere play to the fresh vivacity of Wolfgang. His real earnest at this time lay in his endeavours to conquer the pain of the loss of Friederike, and to further his mental development, which urged on towards poetic embodiment. "My *nisus* forwards is so strong," he writes to Salzmann, "that I can seldom compel myself to take breath and look backwards."<sup>2</sup>

His most intimate confidant was Cornelia. To her he told the story of his enduring love-pain, and she acknowledged that he was right to break off an impossible connection. Before leaving Strassburg he had commissioned Salzmann to send to Friederike two volumes of copper-plates which she had particularly admired. But as Salzmann did not feel sure about the selection of them he wrote to Goethe, who tells him to rely on his own taste; he may, when sending them to the "good Friederike," enclose a note or not, as he wishes.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Goethe to Salzmann, November 28, 1771, *Der junge Goethe*, i. 300-302.—Tr.

<sup>2</sup> Goethe to Salzmann, November 28, 1771. He had begun on *Götz von Berlichingen* at the time.—Tr.

<sup>3</sup> *Der junge Goethe*, i. 296.—Tr.

Wolfgang had from Cornelia an account of Herder's visit to the house ; he had been very friendly, and had expressed a wish, which could not be gratified, to see some of our poet's youthful experiments. In return Cornelia had much communicated to her from the papers accumulated during her brother's stay in Elsass, including the popular ballads he had gathered, which he urged her and her friends, the Geroock and Crespel girls, to sing. By this time he had probably begun reading aloud to his sister, in his own animated way, the great passages of Homer.

His mother's good friend Fräulein Klettenberg still took a kindly interest in him, changed as was his religious mood ; she did not give up her hope that he would yet be a servant of the Lord. Of his abilities she had the highest estimate. At a later time an observation of hers was recalled with pleasure by Goethe's mother :—"When thy Wolfgang goes to Mainz he brings back more new knowledge than others bring from London or Paris." Her religious friend, the good *Legationsrath* Moritz, had died in March 1771.

As for Wolfgang's younger friends, he was specially intimate with Riese and with Dr. Horn ; the latter, who had now lost all hope of winning his Leipzig sweetheart, was the same cheery companion that he had been in former days, not being dispirited even by the smallness of his professional gains. Riese, who had become Secretary to the Vestry Board, was very fond of meeting Wolfgang's ardent assertions with cold doubts and considerations, on which ensued lively discussions. Crespel too was back in Frankfurt ; he had come in the course of the previous year, and had obtained a place as supernumerary (*Accessist*) in the Post Office. His quaint humour and honest kindness were a real gain to the little circle of friends. These four—Goethe, Horn, Crespel, and Riese—used to play chess on a great double board which

belonged to Riese. Crespel was a great lover of music and a master of the *Viola d'amour*. Goethe practised diligently on the violoncello, probably sometimes taking parts with others. To Salzmann, the witness of his disturbed Strassburg days, he writes very soon after his return to Frankfurt :—"What I produce (*make*) is nothing. So much the worse! As usual more scheming than performing. And so not much will ever come of me." He asks Salzmann to procure him from Silbermann a sketch of the ground-plan of the cathedral, and to ask, in passing, whether one could procure a copy of the great original design, and in what way.<sup>1</sup> Perhaps we may ascribe to this period the first sketch of the essay which he dedicated to the founder of the cathedral (p. 204). On the 21st of September (1771) we find him writing to a friend then living in sight of the cathedral. This great masterpiece of German architecture speaks with more emphasis than he can, that a great intelligence differs from a small one mainly in that its work is self-sufficient, seeming to have been co-existent from eternity with its idea, without regard to what others may have done.<sup>2</sup>

His whole soul was now possessed with enthusiasm for Shakespeare and Ossian. He was seized with the bold notion of celebrating the Name Day of the former, October 14,—the birthday, April 23, was too far away for a disciple's eagerness. Through Jung he called on the Strassburg "*Gesellschaft*" to do likewise, and it did, Lersé making the speech demanded by the occasion. To Herder, who had lately written with the usual sharpness, Goethe sent this autumn the dozen popular songs culled from those which the grandmothers of Elsass chanted by their firesides. His letters will shortly say something about Celtic, Gaelic matters. He has not yet got certain necessary books, but soon must. On behalf of his sister he

<sup>1</sup> This letter already quoted, *Der junge Goethe*, i. 296.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> Goethe to Johann Gottfried Röderer; *Der junge Goethe*, i. 315.



invites Herder for the 14th of October, Shakespeare's name-day, which is to be kept with great pomp; and he must, if not in body, be with them in spirit; let him send them by that day, if possible, the Essay on Shakespeare (which just then occupied him), that it may be a portion of their Liturgy.<sup>1</sup>

This letter was very soon followed by one with which Wolfgang enclosed passages from the supposed original *Temora* of Ossian, with literal German translations. He again begs Herder to send the Essay on Shakespeare for the festival. "The first health drunk after that of the Will of all Wills shall be yours," he goes on; "I have already preached together a capital public for the Warwickshire man, and I am translating passages from Ossian, that him too I may proclaim out of the full heart . . . Apostle or Philistine! I remain towards you what I have been."<sup>2</sup> Wolfgang's speech at the festival, which has been preserved,<sup>3</sup> betrays Herder's influence even in the style, though that is more bright and free than Herder's. The Greek drama, it says, set before the people great isolated acts from the lives of their fathers in the clear simplicity of perfectness, roused large undivided emotions in their souls, for it was itself complete and great. "And what souls! Greek souls! I cannot expound to others what I feel to be the significance of that word, but I do feel it, and let me save time by an appeal to Homer, Sophocles, Theocritus; they have taught me to feel it. Now I add quickly, all this being so:—Little Frenchman, what dost thou with Greek armour! 'it is too large and heavy for thee.' Thus it is that French tragedies are themselves their own sufficient parodies. . . . The drama of Shakespeare is a casket of lovely rare things; before our eyes the history of the world undulates past, along the thread

<sup>1</sup> *Der junge Goethe*, i. 297.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* i. 298-300.—TR.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* ii. 39-43; *Zum Schakespears Tag*.—TR.

of time—the thread itself unseen. His plots are, in the common sense of the term, no plots; but his plays all circle round that mysterious point, not yet seen and fixed by philosopher, at which the Idiosyncrasy of the Me, the shaping which our Will would fain assume, clashes with the necessary course of the Whole.” He goes on to say that Shakespeare’s men are absolutely natural, on a colossal scale. Often he has to stand shamed before Shakespeare, confessing himself a poor sinner against nature, who prophesies through Shakespeare, while “my human beings are soap bubbles puffed upward from unreal fantasies.”

And very soon after the young poet was to come upon a noble German figure, whose likeness he felt compelled to set forth in the free Shakespearian manner. The autobiography which Götz von Berlichingen left to defend his name excited in the young Goethe a feeling, which, in a letter to Salzmann of November 28 (1771), he calls a “passion.” He flung himself on the task of dramatising the story; of “saving the memory of a brave man from darkness.” All his strength he expends on this object, which he strives to grasp and carry; and what will not go easily he drags to its place. Homer, and Shakespeare, and all are forgotten; as for Strassburg Cathedral, there is no hurry about that original design of it which he had lately asked after. Towards the middle of December (1771) the play<sup>1</sup> had been completed in a rapid run of about six weeks, during which Cornelia’s praise had encouraged and inspired him; he used to read aloud to her every evening what he had written during the day. He worked mostly in the early morning hours.

Soon after this he gained a new friend, Johann Heinrich Merck, now Army Paymaster (*Kriegszahlmeister*) at Darmstadt, where he had been born eight years before Goethe.

<sup>1</sup> *Der junge Goethe*, ii. 44-196.—TR.

After completing his studies, he was charged with the care of a young Herr von Bibra on his travels, during which they stayed a considerable time in French Switzerland. At Morges



FIG. 11. After an engraving of the time.

on the Lake of Geneva, he met and wedded the daughter of an important Officer of Justice (*Justizbeamte*). On his return from Switzerland he got an appointment in the Privy Court of Chancery (*Geheimkanzlei*) at Darmstadt, changed a year later for one in the War Department. He was especially familiar with English literature, and had done some translation from the English. In all directions, indeed, did his keen restless intelligence search after comprehensive and thorough knowledge on which to base a powerful and efficient activity.

He was long and lean ; his nose was prominent and sharp ; his eyes "light blue, perhaps gray, roved hither and thither, noting everything."<sup>1</sup> Whether his exterior were winning or not, you were subdued by that keen understanding, that easy play of intellect, that ingenuous good-will, that quiet self-reliance. Goethe's description, in which there is an adumbration of the embittered Merck of later days, has done unintended wrong to a noble and capable man. On Goethe, whose genius he recognised and affectionately strove to develop, his action was most beneficial. To his beautiful spirit we have the testimony of his many letters ; of the esteem in which his name was held, even in distant circles ; of the deep, abiding friendship with Goethe, and with many others, men and women, who all delight to praise him. It is true that he had a sharp eye for all weaknesses ; but he had also a natural good taste, which had been perfected by culture. If he censured what was bad, it was always his impulse to point to what was better ; he delighted in furthering the development of real genius : in fact, so far from being a steadfast Denier, he himself was irresistibly impelled to activity in various fields : poetry, art, science, practical affairs. All his life he remained in a situation beneath his deservings ; the feeling of wrong rankled within him ; and this, alas ! together with misfortune in his family, brought out the gall which lay in his character. But at bottom he was always a noble man. Beneath his picture should be written the words which he wrote late in life to his daughter (then fifteen) :—"Our little bit of a good name is all that is left us ; and if I had lost that, I could never have endured the cruel strokes which Fate has dealt me."

Now when Herder, gloomy in Bückeburg, treated our Goethe with almost scornful bitterness, at last relapsing into

<sup>1</sup> "Somewhat tiger-like" (*etwas Tigerartiges*) Goethe says. *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, xii. Buch.—TR.

galling silence, it was special good fortune to meet this keen critic, who stimulated and renewed the lad's ardour by gladly recognising his genius, and by cleaving to him with warm-

hearted good-will. True, Merck had already become a sufferer from physical ailment, and was dispirited about many things, particularly that unsatisfactory situation. But a beneficial impetus was given to him just then, when Deinet of Frankfurt, who had married the widow of the bookseller Eichenberg, put in his hands the management of the *Frankfurter gelehrte Anzeigen*<sup>1</sup>—just such work as he desired. The new Review it was that had brought him to Frankfurt. He there visited



*Joh Georg Schlosser.*

FIG. 12. After an engraving of the time.  
See above, p. 76.

J. G. Schlosser, whom he reckoned on as one of his chief fellow-workers. At Schlosser's house he seems to have met Goethe, who, towards the close of 1771, writes to Herder:—

<sup>1</sup> The *Frankfurter gelehrte Anzeigen* began to appear in 1772, under the guidance of Merck and Schlosser. Chief contributors—Merck, Goethe, Herder, Hieronymus Schlosser, Rector Wenck of Darmstadt, Prof. Petersen of Darmstadt, the Jurist Höpfner of Giessen. At the end of 1773 the Review fell into other hands, and lost its merit and its high fame.—TR.



"Some time ago I had a rich evening in Merck's company. I was as happy as I can be to meet again at last a human being in intercourse with whom emotions develop and thoughts take shape."<sup>1</sup> And Herder's Caroline says in a letter of December 30 that Merck is delighted with Goethe's enthusiasm and genius. This is not the acrid fault-finder, whom we usually figure to ourselves under the title Mephistopheles-Merck. No, we find him taking pleasure in the fresh ardour of his young friend, whom Herder—directly opposite to Merck in this—in writing to his bride nicknames a "crow," a "sparrow-like nature." Merck, with wise toleration, permitted free course to his young friend's thoughts, as equally entitled to existence with his own; never discouraging a difficult mental process by intrusion of his own higher insight. It may have been at this time that Goethe was enlisted as one of the future contributors to the new Review. Of *Götz* no mention was as yet made to Merck. To Salzmann and Herder transcripts of the play were sent about this time. The transcripts were probably made by Philipp Friedrich Seidel, a lad of seventeen, son of a Frankfurt tinman, left an orphan at an early age, and now a servant of the Goethes.

In writing to Herder Goethe calls the play a "Skizzo;" into it however he has put all his strength, because he desired to submit it to the "dear man," whose criticism would not only open his (Goethe's) eyes as to that piece, but guide him in his work at it in the future. In the same letter he confides to Herder that he has in his head the "Life and Death of Socrates" as a subject for drama; he wished to set forth the hero-philosopher-spirit falling victim at length before the infinite massive strength of human worthlessness. Time is needed to ripen the "thought out" (*das Gedachte*) into emotion. Indeed he feels uncertain whether he will be able

<sup>1</sup> *Der junge Goethe*, i. 304.

to soar from the service of the idol which Plato gilds, and to which Xenophon offers incense, to the true religion which recognises in place of a saint a great Man, whom we can take to the heart with enthusiastic love. In his usual submissive way, he begs the reverend priest, while caring for the altar, not to forget the acolyte race, whose fantasy goes forth in wild yearning for the chasuble, but whose strength, alas! setting more before it than it is able for, too often finds its *non plus ultra* in mere *Adjunctus* and sacristan offices.<sup>1</sup>

In a letter of the 3d of February 1772 he thanks Salzmann for the trouble he had taken about *Götz*; Salzmann had been much pleased with it, and had written a letter of careful criticism. There is a period of pupilage, replies Goethe, which we cannot overleap; a remark which reminds us of what we have just heard him say to Herder. Salzmann having inquired about the *Frankfurter gelehrte Anzeigen*, Goethe observes that no Review will surpass it in honesty and independence of feeling and thinking; the staff of writers for it is considerable, and daily increasing; he is not himself connected with it, otherwise than that he knows and esteems the director (Merck), and that an important co-operator in it (Schlosser) is a particular friend.<sup>2</sup> Yet we find Deinet writing on the 8th, calling Goethe—for only Goethe can be meant by “friend of Merck,”—calling Goethe a very industrious *collaborateur* in the department of *Belles Lettres*. And on the 14th comes from the *collaborateur's* pen a criticism of the *Geschichte des Fräuleins von Sternheim*; the anonymous production of Frau von Laroche, published under the auspices of Wieland. The uninvited critics had been hard on the book; Goethe defends, saying that these gentlemen are mistaken in thinking that a *book* stands for judgment, when it is a *Human Soul*.<sup>3</sup> The three following

<sup>1</sup> *Der junge Goethe*, i. 302-304.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* i. 305.—TR.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* ii. 411.—TR.

months saw several more articles by Goethe, and the few that came out in June would have been written before the middle of May, about which time he went to Wetzlar; we know that, for the sake of variety and on account of the profusion of matter, articles often waited a considerable time their place in the Review. Goethe criticised not only lyrical poetry and drama, but many kinds of books, even some on religious subjects; he always speaks with animated decision, often with scathing wit. A little anonymous work by Wieland,<sup>1</sup> in the philosophic humour of which one cannot fail to recognise the author of *Musarion* and *Agathon*, is dismissed with the significant remark:—"Of all earthly possessions the most precious is a heart careless of the foolish praise and blame of the crowd: among thousands you will hardly find two such hearts." In an article of Merck's the observations on Gellert's lectures were written by Goethe.

That "The Life and Death of Socrates" remained an unrealised plan was not due so much to Herder's long silence as to the intractability of the material, to pre-occupation with the Review, and to a life spent more and more in society. Towards the close of the year (1771) appeared a collection of Klopstock's Odes, the first which he himself published. Goethe was familiar already with the most important of them, though in not quite the same form; those on religious subjects interested him little; the bardic garb he liked not at all; he was not moved by the excessive Fatherland and "Cidli" enthusiasm of others. It is true that he recognised the strength of the well-wrought periods, the culmination of art in the verse, and by sympathetic reading aloud strove to illustrate these their merits; still he could not but deal them hard measure while Greek poetry was such a passion to him. Let us remember,

<sup>1</sup> "*Gedanken übe einer alte Aufschrift*," Leipzig, 1772.—See *Der junge Goethe*, ii. 420.—TR.

too, how in his *Götz* he had just been making the last German knight live and move again (*not* to the advantage of the Holy Roman Empire of the German nation), and we shall realise what a watery dream this shapeless *Bardenthum* must have seemed. The primary effect of Klopstock's volume was to make him a skating enthusiast; he used, as he swept over the ice, to make the night air ring with passages from *Der Eislauf* and *Braga*, and (probably) the two other Ice Odes. He trained himself to skate in a place where he was alone, and then invited others to join him. The scene of this skating was probably either the frozen flooded Rödelheim meadows, or those at the *Kettenhof* beyond the Bockenheim gate.

Eager pursuit after indications of Socrates had led our poet to some depth in Plato and Xenophon; but before long, feeling how far he was yet from being able to comprehend the former, he turned from him to the Greek poets. "Then my eyes were opened, and I saw my own unworthiness," he wrote at a later time to Herder, from Wetzlar; "and I fell to at Theocritus and Anacreon; at length something in Pindar fixed me, and there I still remain. Otherwise I have done nothing, and everything is in a dreadful state of confusion with me."<sup>1</sup>

At the beginning of March 1772 he went with Schlosser for a few days' visit to Merck, in Darmstadt; and to Merck's kindly sympathy the young poet opened all his heart. He had at length overcome the grief for Friederike, and revealed himself on this trip in his extraordinary, all-bewitching loveableness; but he watched to prevent his too sensitive heart from any new passion. Herder's betrothed, Caroline Flachsland, who was stopping with her sister, the wife of Privy Councillor (*Geheimerath*) Hesse, met him on two afternoons and at a dinner; she writes to Herder:—"Goethe is a good-hearted,

<sup>1</sup> *Der junge Goethe*, i. 307.—TR.

cheery mortal, without any learned adornment; he finds a great deal of occupation and interest in Merck's children. . . . The first afternoon was spoiled by a game of *Trisett* and two visitors. Only one moment Goethe, my sister, and I sat together in the afternoon sunshine, which was lovely, and talked of you. . . . The second afternoon we spent in a pleasant walk, and in the house over a bowl of punch. We were not sentimental, but very gay, and Goethe and I danced minuets to piano music; and then he repeated for us an excellent ballad of yours that I never heard before" (the Scotch ballad *Edward*). "At my request, often repeated, he sent me a copy of it the day after his return to Frankfurt; but he wrote no letter. Herr Schlosser is good, very good; only he has a little too much society varnish. He likes me very much; and more, I think, than Goethe, which however I regret. In one of his letters to Merck he has talked of me through six lines long. They will come again in the summer." On this visit Goethe also made acquaintance with Merck's more intimate friends, Rector Wenck, Court Preacher Jaup, *Magister* Petersen, and *Geheimerath* Hesse. And he showed *Götz* to Merck, who gave him kind and clear-sighted criticism.

He had now become so thoroughly at home again in his Frankfurt life, and at the same time had found such an inspiring circle of friends in Darmstadt, that he fell into a silence towards those whom he had left in Strassburg, even towards Salzmann and Jung. Not that the image of either friend was effaced, it was rather hidden away beneath the cares and interests of his stirring intellectual and social life. Spring advancing awakened afresh his delight in song. The power of Niederbronn was on him when he wrote the dialogue, *Der Wanderer*; in which there is a moving plaint over the destruction in modern days of the relics of antique art that have survived the former storms.<sup>1</sup> Herder's betrothed writes that

<sup>1</sup> *Der junge Goethe*, ii. 7.—TR.



it is an excellent poem of a hut built amid the ruins of an ancient temple. About the middle of April (1772) Goethe, going to Darmstadt on foot, was overtaken by a violent storm, which for some time he calmly permitted to do its worst; at last, quite exhausted by its force, he sought shelter in a cottage. On this occasion he spoke aloud, as he used to repeat the Ice Odes of Klopstock, dithyrambic verses about the might of the great Genius who lifts him above the commonplace conditions of life, surrounding him with warmth and purity; of the great sweeping force and rage of Pindar, how unlike to the pleasant voices of Theocritus and Anacreon, that lull the charmed heart.<sup>1</sup> What a picture! Frankfurt left behind, where as an attorney he is burdened with petty private affairs; the brilliant, winning, young poet, overtaken by rain and storm; overtaken still more imperatively by a lofty stress of spirit, pouring himself forth in song inspired by Pindar and the Greeks.

Of his stay in Darmstadt Caroline Flachsland writes:—"We spent every day together; went together to the [Bes-sunger] forest; together got wet through and through. We all ran to the same tree, and Goethe sang to us a little song that you have translated from Shakespeare:—"Wohl unter grünen Laubes Dach," and we all joined in the last line:—"Nur eins! das heisst auch Wetter!"<sup>2</sup> The common misfortune made us all very confidential. He read aloud to us some of the best scenes from his *Gottfried von Berlichingen*. I felt in it the beloved spirit of our old Germans; and little George, begging for a white steed and armour, is my George. Then we went on the water," (at a lonely residence in the forest), "but the weather was bad. Goethe is crammed with

<sup>1</sup> *Der junge Goethe*, ii. 3-7.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> Amiens' song in *As You Like It*:—"Under the greenwood tree."  
—TR.

songs." She sends Herder a poem which Goethe made one morning on a lonely walk in the fir wood ; *another excellent one, about a hut built in the ruins of an ancient temple*, she will ask him for should he come again. To this lady and her sister he gave a moving account of his Leipzig love ; Friederike he did not mention, hers was too sacred a memory.

Merck and Goethe about Easter (19th April, 1772) came together to Frankfurt, but passed on immediately to Homburg. "The *Landgraf* and the *Landgräfin* have loaded us with kindness," Merck writes to his wife. "I have had the honour of more than an hour's conversation with his Highness. They sent one of the court carriages to bring us to the forest, where we found a fairy-land." Their visit was more particularly intended for a Maid of Honour, Luise von Ziegler, who had, for a short time back, been the most intimate friend of Herder's betrothed ; Merck had sung her as "Lila." Caroline writes of her :—"She is a sweet visionary maiden ; has had her grave made in her garden ; she has a throne in her garden ; her pleasures are her arbours and roses in summer, and her little lamb, which eats and drinks with her. . . . Her life in Homburg is rather lonely, and that makes her heart so oppressed and full that she regularly clings to any good soul she comes across." Beside the reason assigned here there was unhappy love in the case. She had at that time with her, on a visit, her friend Fräulein von Roussillon, Maid of Honour (*Hofdame*) to the Duchess of Pfalz-Zweibrücken. Merck was especially intimate with Fräulein Roussillon ; he used to accompany her on walks ; tried to divert and cheer her suffering and melancholy ; it may have been he who gave her the name "Urania." When Merck, with Goethe by his side, met these two ladies, Urania received him with warm kisses and embraces, and Lila fell on his breast ; to the young Frankfurt lawyer each gave a cordial hand. He too on a walk one

day ventured to beg from them the rapture of a kiss. He was just as far from love in the matter as was Merck, it was the sentimental usage of a time overlavish in kisses and embraces.

In Frankfurt Merck stopped with the Goethes, although he could always reckon on the house of his old friend Damian Friedrich Dumeix, Dean of St. Leonhard's. "Goethe's sister is agreeable, and they are all good people," he tells his wife. "I am beginning to be regularly in love with Goethe. Here is a human being who touches my heart as very few have ever done." Merck had gone to Frankfurt on Frau von Laroche's account; she Goethe and himself were to travel to Darmstadt together. He writes to his wife that the Laroche had brought her eldest daughter Max, and that both ladies are to be their guests, so she (Merck's wife) is to procure a bed for Goethe and himself in the big room at the house of Professor Jaup. "Frau von Laroche is a lady of the grand world, of very distinguished manners; she speaks French better than German, and her intellect passes over with astonishing lightness from the most solid conversation to the most everyday attentions of society. She assumes when she will the semblance of indifference, she puts it off when she will. She is a strong personality, and I know from experience that it is not a good thing to fall out with such. At least she is quite different in social intercourse from what she is in her letters. She talks infinitely better than she writes." Goethe too was not attracted by the fine court lady, in whom he, to his surprise, saw the author of the *Geschichte des Fräuleins von Sternheim*; the French social tone to which her daughter also had been trained was distasteful to the poet of *Götz*, who loved to speak from the full heart. So Goethe did not go with them to Darmstadt after all. When Herder's betrothed writes that Goethe rages like a lion against Frau von Laroche, she probably borrows

the expression from Merck, who liked the lady less and less the more he saw of her. In Caroline's description of the Laroche we must probably allow for a certain amount of pique at having to play an unimportant part beside the new guest, but there is no doubt

that the main outlines are correct. "A presence, how different from the simple noble Sternheim!" Caroline writes. "A fine dainty lady, a court dame, a woman of the world, with a thousand little adornments, even though she wear no lace; a woman full of wit, full of very delicate intelligence. She enters very lightly and easily, wafts to whom she will a kiss with her hand; her handsome black eyes speak right and left, and everywhere, and her bosom heaves ever so high, so—youthfully that—in short, with her excessive coquetry and acting a part, she has not pleased us."

Caroline goes on to tell how the Laroche said each pretty thing in right silvery tone, which she called the tone of her heart, but which was assumed for mere politeness; she and



FIG. 13. After an engraving by Schule; Leipzig, 1787.



her daughter would fain have ruled society by their wit. Later on Caroline acknowledges the many talents and general excellence of Frau von Laroche ; thinks, however, that she might find good work to do among her children, might love her husband better and trumpet his praises less. Goethe could only feel repelled by the unexpected characteristics of this sentimental fine lady of forty, the friend of Wieland, and also the friend of two men whom neither Goethe nor Merck liked, the brothers Jacobi ; and in her presence we should expect to find him play any but an amiable part.

Immediately after the departure of this curious lady, he settled with Merck again (end of April 1772). Caroline writes:—"We went yesterday with Goethe to my Rock and Hill" (in the Bessunger forest). "He has appropriated a large splendid rock, and goes to-day to cut his name on it ; nobody, however, can climb it but he." [On August 28, 1872, the Darmstadt Society for erecting Memorial Tablets placed a tablet to Goethe's memory on this rock—of the *Herrgottsberg* ; modern learned mystification has tagged on some legend of the Devil's Hoof (*Teufelsklaue*).] Shortly after Herder's betrothed writes:—"Merck came with Goethe to us in the garden ; I walked with him [Merck or Goethe?] alone, we wished you into our neighbourhood—to Giessen, and finally—that you would come to see us in the autumn." Lila too had arrived at this time. Once Goethe, at Merck's house, read to Lila and Caroline the touching story of Le Fevre, in *Tristram Shandy*. Caroline again felt that she was in the presence of an extremely good man, one worthy of her Lila ; only, to win her he must be of the nobility. But no one could be further from any intention of tying his heart than Goethe, at that time altogether intent as he was on the perfecting of mind and spirit. True he had succeeded in disciplining his soul to the patient working out of a great poem, and might hope to find continually henceforth



firm footing ; still he knew that he was only in the beginning of his growth, that before he could stand alone and erect he needed the vivifying and strengthening of a rich experience. In Frankfurt Schlosser was always near, but yet more important was the alliance with Merck, who had given *Götz* the praise it merited when Herder had remained obstinately silent. Gladly would Goethe have prolonged the time to be spent in Darmstadt, where he found so much sympathy ; but Councillor Goethe pressed that his son should go to Wetzlar as he and many others—Crespel being one—had done, to gain as practitioner in the *Reichskammergericht* more exact knowledge of law procedure. However little Wetzlar, narrow, dull, already so long plagued with an Imperial Visitation-Commission, might have to attract, Wolfgang would not oppose in this matter the wishes of his father, who left him so free in other ways ; and so, confiding after all in his destiny, he turned his steps northwards.

## CHAPTER II.

THE SUMMER OF 1772 (MAY-SEPTEMBER) SPENT IN WETZLAR

IN the middle of May (1772) he arrived in the old town, the seat of the *Reichskammergericht*. He took up his quarters on the dark steep difficult *Gewandsgasse*, in a great roomy house—the fourth from the Corn-market on the left, opposite the *Entengasse*. His two rooms on the second story overlooked the street; some time ago Goethe's name was still to be read on one of the panes. He had a letter of introduction to his great-aunt, Frau *Geheimerath* Lange, who lived where the *Gewandsgasse* and the *Schmidtgasse* meet. She was the youngest daughter of the procurator and advocate Dr. Lindheimer; her elder sister was Goethe's grandmother Textor. By her first marriage with the procurator Dr. Dietz she had one son; by her second with the procurator and Privy Councillor Lange two yet unmarried daughters.

How low-spirited Goethe at first felt, in spite of the beauty of the surrounding country, may be inferred from Caroline Flachsland's observation in a letter of the 25th of May (1772), that the place is "lonely, dreary, and empty." This she derived, probably, from the letter which he sent to Lila, enclosing therewith three poems "to be shared"—one for Urania, one for Lila herself—which both relate to the day of their first meeting at Homburg;<sup>1</sup> third, the *Felsweihegesang*

<sup>1</sup> *Der junge Goethe*, ii. 22-26.—TR.

an *Psyche*, which speaks the wish that Caroline—whom he imagines in silent melancholy by her Rock, thinking of her absent Herder—may also be mindful of him who took the very summit of the mountain for his own.<sup>1</sup> In vacant Wetzlar he thought with yearning of the three beautiful souls whom he had found in Homburg and Darmstadt.

On May 25, 1772, he was enrolled among the "*Praktikants*," whose industry was anything but excessive, depending almost wholly on their own good-will. The young poet did as little to increase his knowledge of law as did Uhland forty years afterwards in Paris. If the latter, instead of making himself familiar with the French legal procedure, transcribed old poems in the Library, and wrote new ones of his own, Goethe in Wetzlar pushed on with his study of the Greek poets and his literary development, and abandoned himself to a passionate enjoyment of nature in the lovely valley of the Lahn.

The life of the young lawyers who came together in Wetzlar from every district in Germany was far from being dry and dull, after all. At the largely attended *table d'hôte* of the inn *Zum Kronprinzen* was a mock Table Round, an Order of Knights instituted—so the title said—for the Protection of the Right and the Delivery of Oppressed Youth. This order had been founded by Von Goué of Hildesheim, a member of the Brunswick Embassy, six years Goethe's senior. Goethe too joined this fantastic Bund; it even amused him for some time to take a share in ordering the ceremonial, that the parody might not lack all semblance of the real. He was himself named "Götz von Berlichingen der Redliche;" for people had heard of his play. The Goué above mentioned, who was entitled "Castellan von Coucy," held himself a great genius—had he not already four dramas in print? Another poet whom Goethe met at the

<sup>1</sup> *Der junge Goethe*, ii. 20.—TR.

Table Round was the Gotha Secretary of Legation, Friedrich Wilhelm Gotter,—born 1746,—who had especially formed himself on French literature; was fond of translating plays from the French; and sometimes, too, ventured on little original pieces with some skill, if with no great power. The two poets found a bond of union in their like activities in different channels. Gotter had two years ago been joint-editor with Boie of the first year's issue of the *Göttinger Musenalmanach*, in which he still took some share; and it was no secret that Goethe was a contributor to that new *Frankfurter gelehrte Anzeigen*, which had made such a stir. Another valued friend of Wolfgang's was his equal in age, von Kielmansegge of Mecklenburg, who had come to Wetzlar to look after a law-suit. Goethe felt a very special esteem for this serious deep-thinking man, who refused his sympathy to nothing of human interest. There was also a certain Brunswick Secretary of Legation, exactly eight years older than Goethe, distinguished by his accurate knowledge, his prudence, his unwearied industry, his order, his content, his noble feeling. Not, however, until a considerable time had passed, did Goethe learn to know Johann Christian Kestner of Hannover.

It happened thus. One afternoon Kestner and Gotter had strolled to the hamlet Garbenheim, which, pleasantly nestled on a hill slope about half a league from Wetzlar, was a favourite goal of those who wished to breathe the country air. Entering the garden of the village inn, they found Goethe stretched on the grass beneath a tree, talking with three friends who stood around—von Goué, whom Kestner calls the Epicurean; von Kielmansegge, the Stoic; and a Dr. König, who is a mean between the other two. Even at this first meeting Kestner saw that the young Frankfurter had genius and a vivid imagination. On a more exact knowledge he wrote the following sketch. It is hard to say whether the

likeness of the painter or of him painted therein most appears :—

“ He has a great deal of talent, is a true genius and a man of character ; possesses an extraordinarily vivid imagination, thus speaks mostly in images and similes. He is used to say that he always expresses himself unexactly, never *can* exactly ; adding that when he is older he hopes to be able to think and say the thoughts themselves as they should be. He is passionate in all his emotions ; exercises, however, often great control over himself. His way of thinking is noble ; being very free from prejudices, he acts as is pleasing to him, without inquiring whether he pleases others, whether it is the fashion, whether convention allows it. He hates any constraint. He loves children, and never wearies of their company. He is *bizarre*, and there are things in his behaviour, his outward man, which might repel some ; but with children, with women, and indeed many besides, he is high in favour. Woman he holds in high reverence. *In principiis* he is not yet stablished,—is as yet but striving after a philosophy. To add something on this subject—he holds Rousseau high, though no blind adorer. He is not what is called orthodox ; still this is not from pride, or caprice, or desire to play a part. And on certain great subjects he will open his mind only to a few ; would fain not disturb others in their tranquil beliefs. Indeed he hates *Scepticismum* ; seeks truth and conviction on certain great subjects ; thinks, too, that he is already convinced as to the weightiest : so far however as I have observed is not as yet. He goes neither to church nor to the Lord’s Supper, and rarely prays ; for, he says, ‘ I am not hypocrite enough for that.’ At times he is tranquil as to certain matters, at times anything but tranquil. He reveres the Christian Religion, but not in the form in which our theologians present it. He *trusts* there is a future life, a better state. Striving after Truth, he yet holds the feeling of truth higher than the demonstration. He has already done much, and has much knowledge, much reading ; but he has thought and reasoned still more. He has been mainly taken up with *belles lettres* and the fine arts ; or rather with every kind of knowledge but that which earns bread.”

Besides Garbenheim Goethe loved the grotto-spring overshadowed by limes, beyond the *Wildbacher* Gate, and the pleasant park-like garden on a gentle rise there, the Metzeburg of these days. In this garden he read his Greek poets, or mused on the dear ones far away, or on his strange destiny ;



here his poem, *Der Wanderer*, received its final shaping; it was sent to Darmstadt at the end of May; here, too, probably the translation of Goldsmith's *Deserted Village*, composed in rivalry with Gotter, had its origin.



FIG. 14. The Buffs' House and *Das Deutsche Haus*. From an old cut.

On the evening of the 9th of June (1772) he drove with his great-aunt's daughters to a ball at the hunting-lodge at Volperts-hausen, a hamlet about a league and a half from Wetzlar. On the way they stopped to take up the second eldest daughter of Heinrich Adam Buff, one of the stewards employed by the Teutonic Order of Knights to look after their property in that neighbourhood. He lived in the little two-story house which stood on the left hand side of the approach to "*Das Deutsche*

*Haus*," where the Protestant Girls' School stands now; Charlotte Sophie Henriette Buff, the second daughter, born January 13, 1753, had eleven brothers and sisters still living, all with blue eyes and blonde hair like her own. In the summer or autumn of 1768 Kestner had seen her first, and at once loved her.

He describes her delicate physique, her gentle soul; she was sprightly and lively, of quick conception and great pre-



Charlotte Kestner.

FIG. 15. From A. Kestner's *Goethe und Werther*.

sence of mind. With her chat, her merry notions, her humour, she made everybody feel happy ; then she was virtuous, pious, industrious, teachable, and willing to undergo any womanly toils. Soon the young Secretary of Legation was her declared lover. When her mother, the pattern of a good housewife, died, all the cares of the household fell on the shoulders of Charlotte ; the eldest daughter, Caroline Wilhelmine, seems to have been less capable. Kestner writes :—

“All Goethe’s attention was at once fixed on Lottchen. She is still young ; though no regular beauty she has a very pleasing, attractive, conformation of features ; her glance is like a cheery morning in spring ; especially was it so that day, for she loves dancing ; she was in good spirits ; her dress was quite unelaborate. He noticed in her a feeling for the beauty of Nature, and an unforced wit—rather humour than wit. He did not know that she was no longer free ; I came a couple of hours later, and it is never our wont to manifest, in public resort, any relation closer than friendship. He was extravagantly merry that day ; so he is often, and at other times melancholy. Lottchen made a complete conquest, the easier because she did not try any such thing, but simply gave herself to the enjoyment of the evening. Next day, of course, Goethe must call to inquire after Lottchen’s health. Hitherto he had known her as a merry girl, who liked dancing and pleasures undisturbed by care ; now he learned to know her on that side where her strength is displayed—on the side of her housewifely activity.”

At first sight Goethe was thus captivated by the fresh naturalness of the bright maiden, and she, too, felt much attracted towards the new charming visitor to her sphere. And when he saw her in the midst of the numerous flock of her brothers and sisters, ordering and disposing like a most careful and loving mother, his emotion was deepened ; must not the famous scene where Werther sees Lotte first, be, like so much else in the novel, a transfer from reality ? There was, indeed, in her presence, a magnetism which kept him constantly at her side, though he now knew her to be engaged to Kestner, and never of course thought of striving to win her from his friend.

When von Born, whom he had known since the Leipzig period, said to him in the earlier days of his acquaintance with Lotte, that he would estrange her from Kestner, he answered :—she was much too noble to give up Kestner ; but should she prove capable of such an act, he (Goethe) would immediately abandon her.<sup>1</sup> Kestner was glad to see his little-occupied friend keep Lottchen company. He went generally in the afternoon, and then it was his pleasure to sit at Lotte's feet while her little brothers scrambled over him. In the evenings he often met Kestner in her presence, when he would find her in her blue stripe night-jacket.<sup>2</sup> He was also much with her in her garden that lay on the path to the *Wildbacher* Gate ; you could hear from it the murmur of the *Wildbacher* fountain nigh at hand. The path to the gate led over the so-called "Geese Meadow" (*Gänsewiese*) ; just outside the gate was the vegetable ground, whither Goethe often accompanied Lotte.

Between Goethe and Kestner nearer acquaintance and like tastes knit in time the friendship very close. Kestner writes a couple of months later :—

"Meanwhile, although he could nourish no hope with regard to Lotte, and did nourish none, all his philosophy and inborn pride failed to enable him completely to suppress his affection. And he has qualities to make him dangerous to a woman, especially to one of feeling and taste ; but Lottchen knew how to treat him so as to encourage no budding of hope, yet so that he must admire her way of acting towards him. His peace of mind suffered greatly ; there were various remarkable scenes by which Lotte always rose in my estimation, and he could not but seem a worthier friend ; yet was I often forced on amazement when I considered into what strange creatures can love often transform the strongest and—in other matters—most self-sustained of mankind. In general, I was pained for him, and there arose

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<sup>1</sup> Goethe to Kestner [14th April 1773]. *Der junge Goethe*, i. 364-5.

—Tr.

<sup>2</sup> Goethe to Kestner [27th October 1772], and again [16th June 1773]. *Der junge Goethe*, i. 323 and 373.—Tr.



within me many struggles of affection : for, on the one hand, I thought my power to make Lottchen happy might not be so great as his ; on the other hand, could not endure the thought of losing her. The latter motive was victorious, and I have never marked in Lottchen the shadow of such a thought."

This noble freedom from jealousy was never forgotten by Goethe, who would have been driven to extremity by any attempt to forbid him access to Lotte's presence.

During the hard struggle between love and renunciation, Goethe could not win the calm needful for poetic activity—could not even pour his heaving passion in verse, such chaos ruled in his unquiet soul. To this period, probably, the translation of a short Ode of Pindar<sup>1</sup> is alone to be assigned. With Merck he remained steadfastly united ; he hoped to accompany this friend and his wife on a journey to Switzerland, which they had planned for the following year. And at length from Herder, after a half-year's silence, a reply came. It was, however, in the old tone of bitterness, and would have for ever estranged another, who might less know to prize the greatness of the writer. That hard word about *Götz*—"Shakespeare has quite spoiled you"—was acknowledged by Goethe in its full rightness. The piece must, he writes to Herder (July 1772), be entirely melted down, refined, and must be recast, with the addition of newer, better metal. It is a special annoyance that all is so plainly *schemed* in *Götz*—a reproach that may be laid at the door of Lessing's *Emilia Galotti* also, in which chance and caprice are not once allowed to work their will ; in which any one with half a wit could tell the *why* of every scene, one might almost say of every *word*. Yet he thinks he may hope for himself that "when beauty and greatness weave themselves more in thy emotion, then wilt thou act, speak, write, what is good and fair, without knowing why."

<sup>1</sup> *Der junge Goethe*, ii. 14-16.—TR.



From Pindar, "in whom he now dwells," he has learned that the essence of every mastership is to go deep into a thing, and take firm hold (*Drein greifen, packen, ist das Wesen jeder Meisterschaft*). Since he has felt the force of Pindar's words, *στῆθος* (the breast, heart, affections) and *πραπίδες* (the understanding), a new world has risen within. During the last fortnight he has for the first time read Herder's *Fragmente*; he rejoices to find that what is said there of the Greeks coincides for the most part with his own view. The exposition how Thought and Feeling mould Expression had descended on him like a revelation of the gods. Of the bitter way in which Herder had spoken about the *Felsweihegesang*<sup>1</sup> he declares his opinion with complete frankness; just before he has begged his friend to let him hear his voice more often:—"You know how you would clasp to your heart one who could be to you what you are to me. Only, let not our knowing that we shall often disagree be of force to deter us like cravens; if our passions shock, are we able to bear no shock? It is I more than you who have reason to fear. Enough; have you anything against me, speak it out—direct and serious, or malicious, sneering—as it comes." With Merck, he says further on, he is now fast bound; yet more through a common need than a common aim. Notwithstanding all the furtherance derived from Merck's friendliness and insight, he was without the mighty afflatus-breathing genius of Herder.<sup>2</sup>

When, in the first week of August (1772), Lotte had gone on a visit to acquaintances at Atzbach, a large village beyond Garbenheim, Goethe was unable to restrain himself from going to see her. He did so on the 8th, and informs Kestner of it,

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 182-3. See for Herder's mockery—"Hinangeflogen da kam ein Specht;" *Briefe Goethe's an Herder*; *Herausgegeben von Düntzer und F. G. von Herder*; Seite 46-9.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> See for this letter to Herder, *Der junge Goethe*, i. 307-310.—TR.

by note the same evening. He presses Kestner to go again with him early on the morrow (Sunday), when they would probably be greeted by faces friendlier than they had been to-day in greeting him alone.<sup>1</sup> On the 19th of August we find Lotte at Giessen, at the house of Councillor of War (*Kriegsrath*) Pfaff. Merck and Goethe had agreed to meet there on the 18th, at the house of Professor Höpfner, who was to be pressed into the service of the *Frankfurter gelehrte Anzeigen*. In a highly ludicrous way Goethe introduced himself as a poor awkward student. Professor Schmid, that voluminous scribbler whom Herder had chastised, was most laughably mystified by Goethe on this occasion. Two pleasant days the friends spent with Höpfner. Merck, who now first saw the Lotte whom he already knew through Goethe's praise, had to confess that the praise was not too great. With Lotte and Goethe he was in the evening at Pfaff's house. With the latter he went on the 19th to Wetzlar, whither Lotte followed on the 20th. Probably there Merck saw the stately dark-eyed Dorothea von Brandt, a friend of Lotte, well-inclined to Goethe. She was the second daughter of the *Prokurator Hofrath* who lived in "*das Deutsche Haus*." Merck pointed Goethe to this "Juno form" ("*Junonische Gestalt*"),<sup>2</sup> to whom he ought to divert the course of his affection, rather than waste in hopeless love for the betrothed of another. Goethe was his companion for another day to Giessen; but could not be induced—as Merck had hoped he might—to return to Frankfurt, thence to bring Cornelia to a ball at Darmstadt; Lotte's magnetism was too powerful.

Probably in August 1772 were written those articles for the *Frankfurter gelehrte Anzeigen*, which appeared in its numbers from the 25th of August to the middle of September.

<sup>1</sup> *Der junge Goethe*, i. 310.

<sup>2</sup> *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, xii. Buch (last page).—TR.

Especially noteworthy among them is the critique of the *Gedichte von einem Polnischen Juden* (*Poems by a Polish Jew*), in which Goethe sketches his ideal of the poet of Love; whether he murmur dim foreboding of the joys of love, or hope, or realisation, truth and living beauty should be in his songs. "Yet, are there such maidens?<sup>1</sup>—can there be such youths?" he concludes. He was himself just then threatened with a heavy loss, for his sister Cornelia had favourably received the suit of J. G. Schlosser.

On the 27th of August he sat almost all day by Lotte's side; slitting beans went on until midnight; and the new day, the 28th, his birthday, was ushered in with tea amid friendly faces.<sup>2</sup> Strange freak of destiny! it was Kestner's birthday too. Of course there were plenty of little gifts for both. Probably on this occasion Goethe gave his friend the copy of Goldsmith's *Deserted Village* (the edition put forth by Merck) in which he had written the lines:—

"Wenn einst nach überstandnen Lebensmüh- und Schmerzen  
Das Glück dir Ruh- und Wonnetage gibt,  
Vergiss nicht den, der—ach! von ganzem Herzen  
Dich und mit dir geliebt."

Probably he received, as Werther does from Albert, the little Wetstein edition of Homer, for Werther not only has for birthday the same day as Goethe, but leaves his Lotte, as Goethe left his, on the 10th of September.

Goethe's birthday was always a day of self-examination, and after this one his state of mind grew rapidly more anxious and painful; several times he endeavoured to fly for safety, but could not resolve. On the 5th of September Lotte refused

<sup>1</sup> As the ideal maiden whom Goethe sketches in the critique. *Der junge Goethe*, ii. 439-42.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> Goethe, writing to Charlotte Kestner, 27th August 1774, viz. two years later, recalls this. *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 36. The ages of the three at present are, Kestner 31, Goethe 23, Lotte 19½.—TR.

to accompany her passion-tossed lover to Atzbach. Next morning he writes to Kestner, murmuring at her refusal:—"The morning is so glorious, and my soul so calm, that I cannot remain in the town, I will go to Garbenheim. Lotte said yesterday that she would to-day take a longer walk than usual. Not that I expect *you* out there,—but do I wish it? With all my heart!"<sup>1</sup> On the 10th he dines with Kestner at the garden inn. In the evening he comes to *das Deutsche Haus*, firmly resolved to go away in the morning without leave-taking. Lotte happened to bring the talk on the Future State. Goethe, who sat at her feet and played with the skirt of her dress, also spoke of the Beyond; but speaking, thought not of the clouds, but of the mountains, which would soon lie between them. Lest his grief should break out and betray his intent he went suddenly away. Later in the evening he wrote, out of the oppressed fulness of his heart, lines of farewell to Kestner and Lotte, still preserved; in the morning adding to Lotte's note a last word, enclosing some pictures for the children, forgotten until then. "Always a merry heart, dear Lotte, you are happier than a hundred—but not insensible! and I, dear Lotte, am happy that I read in your eyes your belief that I will never change. Adieu, a thousand times, adieu!"<sup>2</sup> Lotte and Kestner could only approve the step, however they regretted his departure. *Fled* he absolutely had. His great-aunt sent to Lotte to say:—"It was very impolite of Dr. Goethe to go off in this way without taking leave;" and Lotte sent in reply:—"Why have you not brought up your nephew better?"

In Wetzlar Goethe's soul had been stirred to the depths by this maiden of such simple, "ingenuous goodness,"<sup>3</sup> the

<sup>1</sup> *Der junge Goethe*, i. 311.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* i. 312-13.—TR.

<sup>3</sup> Goethe's own word—*Ingenuen Güte*—when writing to Kestner [27th October 1772]. *Der junge Goethe*, i. 323.—TR.

gentle, housewifely, pure, tranquil, tender Lotte, in whom he could mirror his own personality, but who was never to be his ; elevation his spirit had gained in the study of Pindar, and in the fair presence of Nature. It is probable that during the summer he had resumed his sketching, that he might receive the full impression of the landscape ; but the present was too intensely engrossing to leave him faculty for song. Not a verse to Lotte's praise ; no trace of an effort to move her by poetry ; not even new words to old melodies, as with Friederike, though Lotte also sang to the piano. He tore himself away from Kestner's betrothed ; but soon he was drawn back irresistibly to her side, nor was his peace of mind to return until her marriage irrevocably sundered them.



## CHAPTER III.

### FROM GOETHE'S DEPARTURE FROM WETZLAR TO THE MARRIAGE OF LOTTE.

SEPTEMBER 1772—APRIL 1773.

GOETHE'S dislike of Frau von Laroche had been overcome through Merck's influence ; and he had probably received a personal invitation to her house. Having left Wetzlar earlier than was needful, he had time to calm his throbbing pain before entering the circle of the woman of the world. To that purpose should serve a short stay at Ems, after some days of pleasant pilgrimage by the banks of the Lahn, whose graceful windings, and delicate landscapes, and fertile moist valleys, and shaggy castle-crowned heights, with the tender far-off blue of mountain ranges, are still as then powerful to gladden the heart. Had he not already often felt the healing virtue of Nature? He would prove it once more.

So with riven heart he wandered, in the early morning of the 11th of September (1772), down the right bank of the Lahn, which flashed along in the sunlight at a considerable depth below. He was ere long overtaken by his friend von Born, riding to Braunfels. It will be remembered how he had explained his feeling about Lotte to this friend before, and he did not now conceal the cause of his hasty departure from Wetzlar. From Braunfels he passed on to Weilburg and Limburg, mostly alone ; only sometimes for a short time joining others who went the same way. At Limburg he probably

stopped a night ; then leaving Dietz and Nassau one by one behind he arrived at Ems. Goethe himself tells us of his strange interrogation of fate in the presence of the lovely landscape, the sacrifice in vain of his fine many-bladed pocket-knife. He wished to learn whether he should ever attain to worthy portrayal of nature on canvas ; whether he was to be poet or painter ; on which question he did not arrive at full certainty until fifteen years later in Italy. From Ems, where he "several times enjoyed the tepid bath," he pursued his way by boat down the Lahn, until old Rhine widened grand before him. At length our fugitive landed at Thal, a hamlet which lovingly clasps the feet of the great fortress-crowned rock Ehrenbreitstein.

The first of the expected guests, he was warmly welcomed by the master and mistress of the splendid house perched above the Rhine at the far end of the village. Frank von Laroche, a man of four and thirty, had, in the beginning of the previous year, entered the service of the Elector of Trier as acting Privy Councillor (*Geheimrath*), and had settled down here with electoral Coblenz facing him over the Rhine, and the *Residenzschloss*, Philippsburg, close at hand. There were few points of sympathy between Goethe and this excellent man of business, this disciple of the rationalistic Aufklärung. On the other hand, he learned to respect Frau von Laroche, when he saw her the most careful and loving of mothers in her domestic circle, which the presence of two angels adorned ; and when he saw, too, the mild tranquillity she showed towards every one, which just at that agitated time must have seemed to him an unspeakable treasure. Her eldest daughter, now between sixteen and seventeen, a dainty little thing with the blackest eyes, such as Goethe loved, and of the sweetest youthful bloom, how changed she seemed since he had last seen her in Frankfurt. There was in her a sweet consoling

power to rouse his stricken heart again to life and courage, so did she to free and charming culture unite withal a morning freshness of body and soul, fair blossom in the noble Rhineland! where to the young wanderer the days seemed brighter, and the evenings more glorious, than he had ever known before. Of course the image of her whom his will but not his heart had renounced was an amulet to prevent such love as had suddenly kindled in the first meeting with Friederike or Lotte. Yet he felt the maiden sweet, worthy of the best gifts of fortune, was powerfully attracted to her. Her younger sister Luise gave promise of even more loveliness.

Very soon after Goethe's arrival came a man whom he had known since his Darmstadt period as one of the most wearisome of go-betweens, *Rath* Franz Michael Leuchsenring, about three years his senior. This man used to ransack beautiful souls for their sentiment and exaltation, if by any means he might thereby deck out the vacant nothingness of his own being, and gain material to feed his love of intrigue and tale-bearing. Very odious to Goethe was this cavalier, who had once already sown discord between Merck and Frau von Laroche, and who now strove to ply his trade with Herder's betrothed. Still the young poet listened with great interest to letters with which Leuchsenring regaled them, revealing secret traits of the hearts of many whose names he had long known.

Soon after Leuchsenring came friend Merck with his wife, and his boy of six, Henri. Elective affinities soon displayed themselves, Merck paired off with the *Geheimrath* Laroche, Leuchsenring was the companion of the married ladies, the boys played and ran together, while the two girls rejoiced in the enthusiastic talk of the charming young poet, very tender-minded just then with the weight at the heart. A friend of theirs was the nine year old daughter of the manufacturer

D'Ester, in Vallendar near by. Goethe and Frau D'Ester became close friends. With the Minister of the Elector of Trier, the Canon von Hohenfeld, our poet also became acquainted.

For some time Leuchsenring's communications had been accepted in peace, but there was a natural incompatibility between the guests. And this it was the harder to smoothen away, because Leuchsenring was effusive in praise of the brothers Jacobi, whom Frau Laroche too held high, but whom Goethe and Merck could not abide. Happily the appointed termination of the visit arrived without open rupture, for Frau von Laroche was skilful. About the 19th, Goethe and Merck left with feelings of warm friendship for their hostess. Four months later (Jan. 1773) Goethe writes to the noble lady—whom in 1774 he even came to call *Mama*:—"My imagination never ceases to picture the moment at which I had to part from you and your perfect daughters, and with heart full of farewell kissed the last hand and said, 'Do not forget me!'"<sup>1</sup> With yearning he recalled those "scenes of the most deep-felt tenderness," and the "glory of domestic maternal bliss, with such angels adoring around."<sup>2</sup>

On the purposely slow voyage up the Rhine to Mainz, according to Goethe's account he and Merck sketched many of the finest views. In Frankfurt the Merck party stayed a couple of days in the Goethes' hospitable home. Kestner, visiting Schlosser at Frankfurt, found Goethe and Merck there; this was on the afternoon of the 22d of September (1772). "It was an indescribable joy to me," we read in Kestner's

<sup>1</sup> *Der junge Goethe*, i. 346-7. For Goethe's letters to Frau von Laroche, with a commentary, see G. von Loeper's *Briefe Goethe's an Sophie von La Roche und Bettina Brentano*: Berlin, 1879.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> These expressions are from a letter of Goethe's [written November 1772] to Frau von Laroche, which is not in *Der junge Goethe*. See Loeper, pp. 1-7.—TR.

diary. "Goethe fell on my neck and pressed me close." They went together to the *Römer*, where they found Merck's wife and Goethe's sister together. On the rampart, before the gate, they were met by Charlotte Gerock. Merck had first seen Charlotte and Antoinette Gerock in August; writing to his wife, had described them as charming girls, according with Goethe's ideal, all heart, full of *naïveté*; one of them (Antoinette) is bewitching. When Charlotte now saw Goethe after four months' absence, "gladness lightened her face; she suddenly ran up to him and into his arms; they kissed each other heartily." Goethe brought Kestner in the evening to his home. Goethe's mother gave the stranger a friendly welcome "on the word of her son, which is everything with her;" so did Rath Goethe, who entered just then, and with whom Kestner had a pleasant chat. At the wish of Merck's wife, Cornelia played the piano: she could play unusually well. She begged Kestner to bring Lottchen, whom she already loved far away, to see her. Next morning (September 23, 1772) Kestner and Schlosser came to Goethe, and they went through the house. In the afternoon, about three o'clock, Kestner came again; they went among the fair-booths, then to Antoinette Gerock, a passionate adorer of Goethe, who had often spoken of her in Wetzlar. After the theatre Kestner supped with the Goethes.

Goethe still ever thought on Lotte with yearning. Her silhouette, hung on the wall of his sleeping-room, received many a passionate greeting. From Kestner, taking leave on the 23d, he had obtained a promise of speedy tidings of Lotte; he had particularly wished to know whether she had not dreamed of him. When he heard that she had not:—"I take it very ill, and I will that she dream of me this night, and what is more, that she do not tell you of her dream."<sup>1</sup> On

<sup>1</sup> Goethe to Kestner, Friday [25th September 1772]. *Der junge Goethe*, i. 317.—TR.



the 26th he again utters his yearning, yet he will not see her again until he has fallen seriously in love with some one else. The silhouette on the wall leaves him no rest. "If you were only to see how diligent I am," he says in the same letter.

He wrote a little critique for the *Frankfurter gelehrte Anzeigen* of the 29th;<sup>1</sup> he was pretty free at this time from advocate work, at least from suits. Not until the 12th of October did he draw up a short statement, then on the 21st a second, in a case which had once been in his uncle's hands, and five days later a petition (*Bittgesuch*). There legal activity, so far as conducting suits is concerned, ceased for more than six months. A brisk communication is kept up with Wetzlar.

He looks after some purchases of draper's goods on Lotte's behalf; he cannot get her out of his mind, though he often thinks of her friend the dark-eyed Dorthel Brandt.<sup>2</sup> Lotte prepared him a great joy when she sent him the ribbon which she had worn that first evening (June 9th) when they drove to the ball together. The betrothal of his sister, too, was at length determined; their father after long negotiating having agreed to Schlosser's conditions.<sup>3</sup> The marriage was to take place next year, when Schlosser should have obtained an expected appointment at Karlsruhe. This threatening of loss disturbed Goethe's peace—the more because he feared every moment to hear tidings of the betrothal of Lotte also. Of a false report that Goué had shot himself he observes, he honours such a deed too, and pities human kind; he hopes

<sup>1</sup> The critique is on *Zwei schöne neue Mährlein* (they were by Zachariä). See *Der junge Goethe*, ii. 454.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> Goethe to Kestner [beginning of October 1772]. *Der junge Goethe*, i. 319.—TR.

<sup>3</sup> Goethe to Charlotte Buff [8th October 1772]. *Der junge Goethe*, i. 320-1.—TR.

himself never to pain friendly hearts with such tidings.<sup>1</sup> During a few days of lovely weather, at the ingathering of the grapes, he "thought more about Lotte than she thinks of him in a quarter of a year." Yet he hopes, in course of time, to be rid of this plague also.<sup>2</sup>

On his Name-Day came the friendliest greetings from Kestner and all Lotte's circle, but just then, too, came word how young Jerusalem had, in the night between Oct. 29th and 30th, shot himself; the cause an unhappy love. Jerusalem, a friend of Lessing, had lived as Secretary of Legation in Wetzlar. Goethe, more than two years his junior, had neither on first knowing him in Leipzig, nor at second meeting in Wetzlar, drawn very close to him. Jerusalem always regarded Goethe as the coxcomb (*Geck*), though their common friend, von Kielmansegge, had an uncommonly high estimate of the young poet. Goethe had only called on him twice; on one visit borrowing a book which had not yet been returned. Observing him often outside the town gates in the moonlight, it had occurred to Goethe that the lonely fellow was in love.<sup>3</sup> How deeply agitated must he then have been to think that just that courage to take flight, which he himself had had, was needed to save poor Jerusalem.

Yet now again he drifted back to Lotte's presence. When Schlosser, on November 6th, had to start for Wetzlar on business, Goethe went with him. They stayed until the morning of the 10th. Kestner, who went with them everywhere, was yet very glad that Schlosser took his friend away with him again, for the latter "by his original character only follows his

<sup>1</sup> Goethe to Kestner, Saturday [10th October 1772]. *Der junge Goethe*, i. 321-2.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> Goethe to Kestner [October 21, 1772]. *Der junge Goethe*, i. 322.—TR.

<sup>3</sup> Goethe to Kestner. *Der junge Goethe*, i. 324.—TR.

last notion, without troubling himself as to consequences." And yet what strong instance had he to believe in Goethe's ability of self-denial! During this visit Goethe was much with Lotte; also her friend Dorthel was visited. On the last evening, sitting by Lotte on the sofa, he had, he confessed to Kestner afterwards, "right villanous and criminal thoughts" (*rechte hängerliche und hängenswerthe Gedanken*). In the early morning of the 10th, having yet taken no leave of Lotte, he wished to make good the omission, but Schlosser purposely hurrying the departure prevented him—to his vexation. They stopped at Friedberg. Schlosser had to conduct an investigation there; while Goethe had to make a personal inspection, and to negotiate with a slater about repairing a castle. A packet from his father came with a letter which draws from him these words:—"When I one time am old, shall I be like this? Will my soul no longer yearn for what is good and lovely? Strange that while—one might think—man growing old should also day by day grow freer from what is small and sordid, he on the contrary grows always smaller and more sordid." He had begged for silhouettes of the Buff family; now he wants to get Lotte's old comb in exchange for a new one.<sup>1</sup> Kestner sent him the circumstantial account of Jerusalem's death which he had asked for.<sup>2</sup>

For the *Frankfurter gelehrte Anzeigen* he wrote, beside other critiques, one of Wieland's *Der goldne Spiegel*; of the Göttingen *Musen Almanach* 1773; and of Lavater's *Aussichten in die Ewigkeit*; all these critiques are in the numbers ranging from Oct. 27 to Nov. 13 (1772).<sup>3</sup> On his own account he

<sup>1</sup> Goethe to Kestner [Friedberg, 10th November 1772]. *Der junge Goethe*, i. 325-6. See also: Goethe to Kestner [15th December 1772]. *Der junge Goethe*, i. 332.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> Goethe, writing from Darmstadt [29th November 1772], acknowledges it. *Der junge Goethe*, i. 329.—TR.

<sup>3</sup> *Der junge Goethe*, ii. 455, 462, 467.—TR.

published anonymously the pamphlet *Von Deutscher Baukunst. D. M. Ervini à Steinbach*, written in the Hamann-Herder style. Here he defends Gothic architecture against its Italian and German contemners. A sketch of the previous year may be the groundwork of this pamphlet.<sup>1</sup>

Most of his time was spent in drawing; of legal practice he would hear nothing. In the time of his extremest depression came the offer of the Strassburg Legal Faculty to make him a Doctor: this was Salzmann's work. He at once declined it. "The letter came at an unhappy time," he wrote to Salzmann, "and then, not to speak of the ceremonial, all thought of being a doctor is gone by. I am so sick of *Licentieren*, so sick of all practice, that I at most only try to keep up appearances, and in Germany the one degree is as good as the other."

On the 16th of November (1772) he hastened to Darmstadt to Merck, in whose company he hoped to go to Mannheim, to renew the joy of seeing the antiques there. But Merck could not get away. Goethe stayed four weeks with him, diligently occupied in sketching and engraving. "Our good Goethe is here," writes Caroline on Nov. 27, "lives and sketches, and we sit at the winter table around him, and we look and listen. Merck's house has become an Academy; they draw, they etch. He has drawn a little landscape piece for me with a mountain castle, and at the foot of the mountain a village." Eight days later we hear Goethe is teaching Merck to draw; and seems to have become more quiet and refined. Goethe himself writes to Herder, December 5, 1772:—"I am now all draughtsman, I am courageous and happy. I have been very glad to find you have been so interested in *Erwin*" (the pamphlet *Von deutscher Baukunst*). "Merck is making verses" (he was writing his satirical Guide to making

<sup>1</sup> *Der junge Goethe*, ii. 204-214, and see: Goethe to Kestner [13th November 1772]. *Der junge Goethe*, i. 327-8.—Tr.

one's Fortune as a Poet, the *Rhapsodie von Johann Heinrich Reinhart dem Jüngern*), "and he is printing" (Merck had set up a printing-press in Langen, near Darmstadt). "We mirror ourselves in each other, and we lean on one another, and we share the joys and tediums of this mortal life." He thanks Herder for having in an essay on Shakespeare, though without naming him, blessed him for *Götz*. "We are the ancients," he adds; "a little modified here and there does not matter. And when you come in spring [for his marriage] it will be splendid. My father greets you, and you shall come beneath his roof with the greatest welcome, that is understood; now I have eased my conscience so far as he is concerned."<sup>1</sup>

About the 11th of December (1772) he returned to Frankfurt. He heard that Lottchen's sister of sixteen, Helene, of whom he had heard a great deal, had returned to her home, where she was to take Lottchen's place by and by. In bitter mood he writes:—"I believe I would prefer her to Lotte. By her portrait [sent to him by Kestner] she seems an amiable girl—much better than Lotte, if not exactly like. And I am free and love-needy. I must see to come; yet that would be no use either. Here I am again in Frankfurt, revolve new plans and crotchets, all which I should *not* do had I but a sweetheart."<sup>2</sup> Yet we hear three days later that he is in tolerable spirits, and working stoutly.<sup>3</sup> Drawing especially was carried on with great diligence. He had seven fine heads after Raphael in his chamber, and in copying one of them he found an aid to tranquillity. By this time it had been settled that Merck was to withdraw from the editorship of the *Frank-*

<sup>1</sup> *Der junge Goethe*, i. 330.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> Goethe to Kestner [12th December 1772]. *Der junge Goethe*, i. 332.—TR.

<sup>3</sup> Goethe to Kestner [15th December 1772]. *Der junge Goethe*, i. 332-4.—TR.



*furter gelehrte Anzeigen*, as, without asking his opinion, the publishers had accepted articles which he did not approve of. Schlosser followed Merck, and Goethe declared that he too would have no more to do with the review. Yet two articles<sup>1</sup> which appeared—one on the 18th, one on the 25th—were from his pen; and two more appeared during the course of January and February 1773, which were probably written in December 1772.

He had not withdrawn altogether from his old merry companions. On the 24th (December 1772) he went “with some capital young fellows to the country,” where “their merriment was very noisy, shouting and laughter from beginning to end;” but he drank no wine. When they came to the bridge on their return, the winter sun had set, and darkness ascending from the east covered north and south; only in the west there was a silent region of diminishing faint light. The spectacle affected Goethe deeply; and that he might not let the impression go, he hurried to the Gerocks’ house, got pencil and paper, and sketched the whole picture “glimmering warm” (*dämmernd warm*) as it stood in his soul. The general approval told him that he had done well; in his good spirits he wanted to have them all throw dice for the sketch; but every one insisted that it ought to be sent to Merck. Then they spent a pleasant evening together. Next morning—Christmas morning, 1772—he rises very early; has coffee made; and writes a long letter to Kestner.<sup>2</sup> A day or two after, he writes that he has made up a *Nachrede* (epilogue) for the publisher of the *Frankfurter Anzeigen*, in which it is stated that the critics whose work there had been most complained

<sup>1</sup> On Sulzer’s *Die schönen Künste*, On Joch *Über Belohnung und Strafen nach türkischen Gesetzen*. *Der junge Goethe*, ii. 470, 477.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> From which the foregoing account is drawn. *Der junge Goethe*, i. 334-8.—TR.

of are retiring. He was pleased to find that he succeeded in quizzing (*turlupinirt*) both the public and the publisher.<sup>1</sup>

His moods were as various as his occupations. In the beginning of the new year (1773), we find him zealously urging on his drawing. "I am excessively the artist just at present," he writes to Kestner.<sup>2</sup> But at the same time the humour seized him to make his appearance as author under the mask of a pastor. Following the precedent of Rousseau's *Lettre d'un vicaire*, he wrote a *Brief des Pastors zu \* \* \* an den neuen Pastor zu \* \* \* Aus dem Französischen*.<sup>3</sup> In this *Letter* a loving, earnest soul expounds—in opposition to cold overweening rationalism—that true tolerance which arises from faith in Christ—the only ground of salvation. So fervent and beautiful is the pleading, that Lavater and his circle were deeply moved. What Goethe had observed during his intercourse with the Klettenberg circle; what he had himself felt during his temporary mystic mood, is here exalted to poetry, and clothed in clearly-outlined noble poetic form. The success of this attempt encouraged him to publish—under the mask of a country clergyman of Swabia—two peculiar Biblical expositions which he had long had in his desk. Already Hamann had given *eine Beilage von einem Geistlichen in Schwaben* to his *Denkwürdigkeiten des seligen Sokrates*.<sup>4</sup> The first of Goethe's *Zwo wichtige, bisher unerörterte biblische*

<sup>1</sup> Goethe to Kestner [December 1772]. *Der junge Goethe*, i. 338. This *Nachrede* was first included in *Goethe's Werke* in the critical edition lately brought out by Gustav Hempel of Berlin, Bd. xxix. S. 76. It is in *Der junge Goethe*, ii. 480-83.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> "Ich bin sehr Künstler jetzt." Goethe to Kestner [18th January 1773]. *Der junge Goethe*, i. 342.—TR.

<sup>3</sup> *Letter from the Pastor at — to the new Pastor at —. From the French.* *Der junge Goethe*, ii. 215-229.—TR.

<sup>4</sup> *A Supplement by a clergyman in Swabia to his Memorabilia of the dead Socrates.*—TR.

*Fragen*,<sup>1</sup> discusses the contents of the Tables of the Law ; the thesis maintained, that on the Tables were written, not the Ten Commandments, but ten constitutions of the covenant of God with Israel, had been already put forth in his Strassburg Doctor's Dissertation.<sup>2</sup> The second part, an explanation of the phrase "speak with tongues," in the *Acts of the Apostles*, had also been long written. The tone of a simple believing pastor is hit wonderfully well, and the clothing of language and circumstance happily imagined and wrought out.

To the beginning of the year (1773) falls also the crack-brained performance *Concerto drammatico composto dal Sigr. Dottore Flamminio detto Panurgo secondo. Aufzuführen in der Darmstädter Gemeinschaft der Heiligen*<sup>3</sup>—a humorous reply to a humorous collective letter from his Darmstadt friends. But it is about this time that Goethe will have been more closely meditating a *great* dramatic design—the *Mahomet*.<sup>4</sup> He desired to set forth how, in carrying out the details of a great idea, the prophet is forced at length to artifice ; and so the earthly by degrees chokes the divine. At the Wetzlar period he had acquired some knowledge of the Koran, proved by his using a text<sup>5</sup> from it in a letter to Herder written in July 1772 ; this text is in the extracts from the Koran which Goethe made, and which are still preserved.

<sup>1</sup> *Two important hitherto undiscussed Biblical questions. Der junge Goethe*, ii. 230-241.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> See Exodus, xxxiv. 10-28.—TR.

<sup>3</sup> *Der junge Goethe*, ii. 197-203.—TR.

<sup>4</sup> The song of Ali and Fatema (see *Der junge Goethe*, ii. 30-33) appeared in the *Göttinger Musenalmanach* for 1774, which was published in autumn 1773 ; the song was one of those which, in March 1773, Goethe would send to the editor through Kestner, if Merck had not already sent it.—*Diüntzer in the Goethe-Jahrbuch* for 1880.—TR.

<sup>5</sup> *Der junge Goethe*, i. 308 :—"Ich möchte beten wie Moses im Koran : 'Herr mache mir Raum in meiner engen Brust.'"—TR.

His grief for Lotte he sought to assuage as he best might, little as he could quell his love. As he writes to Kestner, late on the evening of the 18th of January (1773), he says good-night to "sweet" Lotte before her silhouette; he has to-day already wished her many a "good-day" and "good-evening." "Wherever you may be," he says, "happy and loved too, by me more than by any other here below. And I too am happy, content in myself; for I never have wanted for anything external yet." Goethe's sister writes at the same time that they are living a simple and contented life; when they sit round the fire chatting, or listening to Wolfgang read aloud, they often wish for their Wetzlar friends. Among Cornelia's friends were two daughters of Philipp Anselm Münch, a merchant living in the *Döngesgasse* (the house is now No. 20); the elder, Susanna Magdalena, had been born on the 11th of January 1753; Anna Sibylla on July 3, 1758. The humorous remark in a letter of the 26th (January 1773) to Kestner refers to the former of these:—"Tell Lotte: a certain girl here whom I am heartily fond of, and whom I would certainly choose if I were to marry, was born too on the 11th of January.<sup>1</sup> It would be nice—two such couples. Who knows what God's will is?"<sup>2</sup> A fortnight later he says:—"The maiden greets Lotte; in character she has much of Lenchen; looks like her too, says my sister, judging by the silhouette. If we loved each other so dearly as you two! I call her meanwhile 'dear little wife;' for lately in company when throwing dice for us youths, I fell to her. She had to beat a throw of seventeen; had given up hope; and lo! she throws all sixes!"<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Lotte was born January 13, 1753. See p. 186. Thus Goethe was mistaken, according to Herr Düntzer. (I just note, however, that Herbst in his lately published *Goethe in Wetzlar* (p. 104) makes Lotte's birthday fall on January 11.)—TR.

<sup>2</sup> *Der junge Goethe*, i. 343.—TR.

<sup>3</sup> Goethe to Kestner [11th Feb. 1773]. *Der junge Goethe*, ii. 349-50.—TR.

The ice was exceedingly good at the beginning of February 1773; he tells Kestner how the sun of the 4th rose and set while he still skated. "And yet other matters of rejoicing which I cannot speak of," he goes on. "On this make your mind easy—that I am almost as happy as people who love as you do; that there is as much hope in me as in lovers; that I even of late have felt some poems; and what else accords with all this. My sister greets you; they greet you, my maidens; they greet you, my gods—specially fair Paris here on the right, golden Venus there, and the messenger Mercurius" (the reference is to a picture), "who delights in the fleet-footed, and yesterday bound beneath my feet his 'divine sandals—the fair golden sandals that bear him over the barren sea and the infinite earth with the wind's breath'" (*after Homer*). "And so the good beings in heaven bless you."<sup>1</sup> The bright winter morning, and a letter from Merck announcing his coming early next day, had made Goethe thus high-spirited.

To this period, probably, belongs that bold and right marking out of the true poet's power over language, the lines beginning, "Was reich und arm! was stark und schwach!" also the fable *Adler und Taube*, which expresses feelingly the thought: No inactive calm can bring content to a powerful spirit.<sup>2</sup>

Merck stopped from the 6th until the 11th (February 1773). During this time roguish doggerel verses to Herder were concocted; the printing of the *Zwo biblische Fragen* was decided on (they dated it "*M. den 6. Februar 1773*"); and the poem *Der Wanderer* was given to Merck, who would send it to Boie, the publisher of the Göttingen *Musen Almanach*.

<sup>1</sup> Goethe to Kestner [5th February 1773]. *Der junge Goethe*, i. 347-8.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> *Der junge Goethe*, ii. 16-18.—TR.



Influenced by Merck, he made up his mind to let *Mahomet* stand by, and to remodel *Götz*; then Merck would have it printed and published—Goethe should only bear the cost of the paper.<sup>1</sup>

Steadily now did he labour at *Götz* in his “watch-tower” (*Warte*),<sup>2</sup> almost altogether shutting himself up from society, though it was Shrovetide. The re-shaping of *Götz* was a weighty task; for entire new scenes had to be inlaid: the fifth act especially had to be in large part re-written. The young poet had sufficient self-mastery to omit many powerful scenes, which had spoiled the unity of the whole. During all this period he only once suffered himself to be much agitated—the cause Kestner’s writing that he was soon to leave Wetzlar.<sup>3</sup> The remodelled play, in which judgment and vivid imaginative power were equally displayed, was ready for the printer in the beginning of March (1773).

The intercourse with Salzmann, too, was again resumed. This good friend had sent his essay on Revenge—part of his *moralisch-philosophische Abhandlungen*—to Goethe. The Goethes, father and son, were much pleased with it. Before this, Salzmann had sent to him adaptations from Plautus “by a friend,” who wished to have them printed. The adapter was Lenz, he had asked Salzman to keep his name secret. Goethe had commented on these adaptations; the writer had declared his agreement with the critic; and, accordingly, in a letter to Salzmann on the 6th of March (1773), Goethe gives further counsel on adaptation.<sup>4</sup> Immediately after this, Lenz, who

<sup>1</sup> On the inaccuracy of the *Dichtung und Wahrheit* account of *Götz* see Düntzer in the *Goethe-Jahrbuch* for 1880.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> Goethe to Kestner [22d February 1773]. “Alles tanzt um mich herum . . . und ich sitze auf meiner Warte.” *Der junge Goethe*, i. 350.—TR.

<sup>3</sup> Goethe to Kestner [25th February 1773]. *Der junge Goethe*, i. 350-1.—TR.

<sup>4</sup> *Der junge Goethe*, i. 351-4.—TR.

(with good reason!) had long held back from Goethe, acknowledged the authorship and communicated direct with his friend.

Anticipation of Lotte's marriage kept Goethe in uneasy tension of mind. Fearing that Kestner would tell him nothing of it until all was over, he commenced to correspond with Hans Buff, Lotte's brother, a schoolboy of sixteen.<sup>1</sup> From Hans he learned that Kestner had ordered the marriage ring in Frankfurt; immediately he himself took up the matter, and as the rings submitted did not please him, he caused new ones to be made.<sup>2</sup> His extreme perturbation is evidenced by a letter to Johanna Fahlmer. This lady, the rather young aunt by marriage of the Jacobis,—she was but five years older than Goethe,—had come in June 1772 to Frankfurt, in the company of her mother (the daughter of a Frankfurt pastor), and of *Galeriedirektor* Mannlich. Merck paid her a visit here in August, and Goethe soon after his return from Wetzlar in September (1772) made her acquaintance. But it is only now that he seems to have become intimate with the lady, whom J. G. Jacobi has sung under the name “Adelaide,” and whom Frau von Laroche held in high esteem. He began to give her lessons in English: he used Goldsmith's *Vicar* as a text; but one morning, instead of going to her, he sends the *Vicar* and a dictionary that she may work by herself; for he finds himself in a “state of perturbation.” And unmixed though it be with anything of vexation or anxiety, yet she would, for some days to come, have a negligent instructor.<sup>3</sup> About the same time came the very unwelcome news that

<sup>1</sup> Goethe to Kestner, enclosing a letter to Hans Buff [15th March 1773]. *Der junge Goethe*, i. 354-356.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> Goethe to Kestner [end of March 1773?]. *Der junge Goethe*, i. 357.—TR.

<sup>3</sup> Goethe to Johanna Fahlmer [March 1773]. *Der junge Goethe*, i. 356.—TR.

Merck had decided to go with the *Landgräfin* and the three princesses to Berlin in the beginning of May (1773); was he now to lose for such a long time this truest of friends—to lose the hoped-for summer visit to Switzerland in his companionship!

The news that Lotte's marriage had taken place on Palm Sunday the 4th of April (1773), came as a surprise. With deep emotion he writes to Kestner:—"I wander in deserts where no water is, my hair is my shadow from the sun and my blood is my well-spring of water. And yet your ship, safe, first arrived in port, with coloured streamers, and rejoicing cries, makes me glad too. I am not going to Switzerland. And beneath or above God's sky, I am ever your friend and Lotte's."<sup>1</sup> But at Easter he had a good day, so good that "Labour, and Pleasure, and Endeavour, and Enjoyment all flowed in one." In the "fair and solemn evening of stars," he thought sadly of that last strange talk on the eve of his departure from Wetzlar. Then follows an outbreak of the fretful humour born of his loneliness.<sup>2</sup>

But as his moods varied with extreme rapidity, he about this time<sup>3</sup> concocted a comical *Jahrmarkt*, in which Leuchsenring figured, probably as a pedlar with letters and ribbons, which he offers for sale to all persons of sentiment. Jacobi's true-hearted half-sister, Charlotte, returned from a Hannover boarding-school to the house of her aunt Fahlmer—whom Goethe henceforward always called "*Tante*" or "*Täntchen*," as they called her in the family. To these two ladies, Goethe

<sup>1</sup> *Der junge Goethe*, i. 359.—Tr.

<sup>2</sup> Goethe to Kestner [11th April 1773]. *Der junge Goethe*, i. 361-2.—Tr.

<sup>3</sup> In the beginning of April 1773 Caroline Flachsland tells Herder that "Junker Berlichingen" has lately sent a *Fahrmarkt* in verse to Darmstadt.—Tr.

sent a poem on the "high, holy" Easter morning; in this poem he pours forth the feelings inspired by the beautiful spring weather, when at his window early in the morning he "heard the voices of the birds, and saw the almond-tree blossom, and all the hedges green beneath the glorious heaven."<sup>1</sup> To this period we must ascribe probably single songs of the *Mahomet*, one of which<sup>2</sup> he at the end of the month sent, with two other poems, through Kestner to Boie. Though all his contributions appeared without his name, yet his first appearance in the lyric ranks was thus through the medium of the *Musen Almanach*.

On the 13th of April Anna Sophie Brandt, a girl of twenty, who was one of Lotte's friends, came to the Frankfurt Fair. She brought to Goethe Lotte's carefully kept bridal bouquet, and he placed it in his coat. Glad as he was to hear from Anna Brandt the details of the wedding, an intense agitation was roused by the vivid realising that Lotte was irreclaimably gone to another.<sup>3</sup> Frankfurt became unendurable: he hurried to Darmstadt on foot to see Merck once more before the Berlin journey, and to be present at Herder's marriage, though Herder was on very strained terms with Merck and Goethe. Caroline thought the young poet reserved, but she was prejudiced in his disfavour through Herder.

A great shock during this stay was the death of Urania, to whose death-bed Lila had hastened from Homburg. "Early this morning she was buried," he writes to Kestner on the 21st April, "and I am ever by her grave, and linger there to give up my breath and warmth of life, and to be a voice from the stone to the passer-by. But alas! it is forbidden to me to put up a tablet to her memory, and I am vexed that I may not defy the gossips and tattlers."<sup>4</sup> A rumour that Urania

<sup>1</sup> *Der junge Goethe*, i. 360.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> See page 208, note 4.—TR.

<sup>3</sup> Goethe to Kestner [14th April 1773]. *Der junge Goethe*, i. 362-5.—TR.

<sup>4</sup> *Der junge Goethe*, i. 366.—TR.

was in love with him seems to have been current; it was probably not unfounded, though Goethe himself had not guessed the fact. "My poor existence has stiffened into barren rock," he goes on. "This summer all depart. Merck with the Court to Berlin; his wife to Switzerland; my sister; Caroline Flachsland; you; everybody. And I am alone. If I do not take a wife or hang myself, then say that I am right fond of life, or invent something even more to my honour." On the 28th of April he breaks out shrill:—"God forgive it to the gods, who play with us so." Yet he will forget all his pain. And let Kestner forget everything in Lotte's arms, work his daily work, enjoy the sun, and in hours of rest remember how Goethe loves him.<sup>1</sup> He had a sorrowful parting with Merck, whom he saw depart with the *Landgräfin* and the three princesses. The youngest of these princesses Goethe was destined to greet as his sovereign during more than half a century.<sup>2</sup> After her death he said that since he had seen her long ago, a light slender girl, step into the carriage on the Frankfurt *Zeil*, he had been faithfully devoted to her. Even worse than to part from Merck was to meet Herder, who was and remained hostile. Through Leuchsenring's kind offices, Herder, then in great anxiety about his call to Göttingen, had become incensed against Goethe, who, however, was present at the wedding (May 1), next day returning to Frankfurt, where he awaited the coming of Herder and his young wife. Of this visit we have no details. But Goethe's letter to Sophie Laroche, 12th May 1773, proves the grief felt at his friend's estrangement:—"I am alone, alone, and grow daily more so. And yet I would endure it—that souls which are made for one another meet so seldom, and are generally apart; but that they should misunderstand one another most in the moments of

<sup>1</sup> Goethe to Kestner, Darmstadt, Sunday [28th April 1773].—TR.

<sup>2</sup> The Duchess Luise of Saxe-Weimar died in February 1830.—TR.



most auspicious union ! that is a dreary enigma.”<sup>1</sup> For a year and a half all intercourse with Herder ceased.

Before Kestner left Wetzlar, Goethe’s grief for Lotte was somewhat assuaged, but Kestner thought it needful to spare him still, and the newly married people did not come to Frankfurt. Before their departure Goethe wrote composedly : —“ May all good spirits bless your journey. I am occupied enough and am content. My solitude well agrees with me. So long as this endures ! Adieu ! dear Lotte, now for once in right earnest, Adieu ! ”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Not in *Der junge Goethe*. See *Loeper*, pp. 13-14.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> Goethe to Kestner (May 1773). *Der junge Goethe*, i. 369.—TR.

## CHAPTER IV.

THE PUBLICATION OF *GÖTZ*—THE BEGINNING OF FAME.

MAY—DECEMBER 1773.

AFTER his return from Darmstadt (2d of May 1773) he took up anew his long discontinued legal activity. By the 7th of May we find him drawing up a statement in a case in which he had been employed before ; between the 26th and the close of the year we find him engaged on several cases, transferred to him from his brother-in-law to be, who had gone to Karlsruhe. But he got other clients too, so that at some periods, in August and September particularly, his hands were pretty full. He wished to please his father, who had always left him so free, and who, even now, permitted him to regard his profession as of subordinate importance. The wise and loving mediation of his mother, with Fräulein Klettenberg for ally, had hitherto availed to prevent an incurable division. Father and son now made mutual concessions. The former, perceiving how distasteful practice was to Wolfgang, would be content if only it might not be altogether given up. He had had fine plans about his son's Frankfurt life. But he had, by degrees, grown familiar with the possibility that Wolfgang, instead of settling down in the handsome parental house with a respectable official position, would, at least for a time, find away from home pleasures and labours more correspondent to his genius. The fame which Wolfgang soon won as a poet made his

father patient towards many an irregularity, and the Frau Rath was, as has been said, a wise and loving mediator. Wolfgang's legal activity continued during 1774 and 1775 also, until the time came to leave Frankfurt for good.

When at last, on the 16th of June (1773), he can send to the happy married couple in Hannover the first copy of *Götz*,



FIG. 16. Silhouette sent by Goethe to Lotte. From A. Kestner's *Goethe und Werther*.

we hear that he is dreaming and dawdling (*gängel*) through life, conducting detestable law-suits, writing *dramata*, novels, and such like, sketching and smudging, and driving things on as well as he can. "The people say that the curse of Cain is on me. But I have slain no brother. And I think the people are fools."<sup>1</sup> Among the plans that then hovered in his brain was that of *Faust*.

On the 14th he had outlined his silhouette for Lotte, on the back he wrote:—"Good-night, Lotte!" With it he intended to forward the verses which we give in facsimile.<sup>2</sup> A month later he writes to Kestner:—"I am right diligent, and if Fortune is good you will soon receive something else in another manner. I wish Lotte were not indifferent to my drama. I have already garlands of praise of many kinds woven of all manner of leaf and flower—even Italian flowers; garlands which, each in turn, I have tried on, and laughed at my face in the glass. The gods have sent me a sculptor, and if, as we hope, he can find work here, I will forget a great deal. Sacred Muses reach me the *aurum potabile*, *elixir vite* of your goblets! I languish. What pain it is to dig wells and build a cottage in waste places. And my popinjays, which

<sup>1</sup> Goethe to Kestner [16th June 1773]. *Der junge Goethe*, i. 372-3.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> Reprinted *Der junge Goethe*, i. 381.—TR.



I have reared" (he means his thoughts and feelings), "which chat to me, they too, like myself, sicken and hang their heavy wings. This day last year it was very different; I would take my oath I sat with Lotte this day last year. I am working up my situation in a play (*Schauspiel*) for the defiance of God and of man. I know what Lotte will say when she sees it, and I know what my reply will be."<sup>1</sup> Thus all other plans were subordinate to the dramatic presentation of his unhappy love; as was his way he would free himself from his pain by dealing with it as a material for a work of art.

He sent copies of *Götz* in all directions, to revive the memory of him in his friends; to Hermann in Leipzig; probably to Krebel there too; to Gotter in Gotha, who may bring out an adaptation of it on the private stage of which he is manager; to Salzmann and Lenz in Strassburg; to the French Lieutenant Demars in Neubreisach (Neuf-Brisac). To the last-named he writes that the play must make its fortune among soldiers; how it will get on among Frenchmen he is doubtful.<sup>2</sup> To the great names in literature he did not turn; not to Lessing, whom he always held so high; nor to Wieland, who had been constantly going down in his esteem; nor to Nicolai of Berlin, the lover of strife. Nor do we hear of a copy being sent to Herder; who yet thought so much of *Götz* that he wrote to Nicolai he knew not "any Marionette of modern manufacture as such that he would exchange for it."

Goethe had also been found willing to write for the *Frankfurter gelehrte Anzeigen* again. Of the articles now in Goethe's works four were printed in the interval between April 9th and May 7th (1773); only the earlier part of the last of these articles—that on Lavater's *Predigten über das Buch Jonas*,<sup>3</sup> was written

<sup>1</sup> Goethe to Kestner in Hannover [July, 19th 1773]. *Der junge Goethe*, i. 375-6.

<sup>2</sup> *Der junge Goethe*, i. 374.—TR.

<sup>3</sup> Sermons on the Book of Jonah. *Der junge Goethe*, ii. 495-8.—TR.



by Goethe. On the 15th of May he writes again after such a long silence to Assessor Hermann in Leipzig, to beg his counsel or aid in the matter of a fine incurred by the publisher.<sup>1</sup> On July 20th appeared Goethe's notice of the *Lieder Sineds des Barden*, on August 17th that of *Herr Holland's philosophische Anmerkungen über das System der Natur*.<sup>2</sup> And here he ceased for the present to occupy himself with criticism.

At the beginning of August (1773) he had the happiness of a week of Sophie von Laroche's company. "She has given us eight happy days," he tells Kestner. "It is a delight to live with such beings. Oh, Kestner, how well it is with me! if I have not their actual presence, yet they stand ever before me, my dear ones all. My circle of noble men and women is the most precious thing that I have won for myself."<sup>3</sup> Soon after came the bright young Helena Elizabeth Jacobi to fetch Charlotte away from Johanna Fahlmer. Helena had been for nine years the wife of *Kammerrath* Friedrich Jacobi, in Düsseldorf. To Kestner Goethe (September 15) calls her "a right dear worthy lady," whom he has "been able to live on right good terms with;" yet he has avoided all allusion to the Jacobi brothers, has acted as though she had nor husband nor brother-in-law; for he does not desire their friendship, despising them so. Let them compel his esteem; as they at present compel his contempt, then he will and must love them.<sup>4</sup> "Short as was the time I saw you," he wrote to this new friend,

<sup>1</sup> Of the *Frankfurter Anzeigen*; Goethe to Assessor Hermann, 15th May 1773. *Der junge Goethe*, i. 370-1.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> Herr Holland's Philosophical Remarks on the *Système de la nature*. *Der junge Goethe*, ii. 498 and 503.—TR.

<sup>3</sup> Goethe to Kestner [between 15th and 21st August 1773?—*Trans.*] *Der junge Goethe*, i. 377-8.—TR.

<sup>4</sup> Goethe to Kestner, September 15, 1773. *Der junge Goethe*, i. 380. (foot).—TR.

even before her departure,<sup>1</sup> "there hovers constantly about me still a so thoroughly delightful impression of your presence, and that you like me, even a little bit." Lotte Jacobi too he had found very attractive. Their aunt went with the sisters, and stayed some time at Düsseldorf.

In the company of his Frankfurt friends of both sexes he found the summer of 1773 pass away with plenty of variety; though at the end of June he complains<sup>2</sup> that he is painfully holding together the dreary remnants of their delightful company; and wishes for kind winter's return, to make the water solid, and hunt the maidens indoors again. Friend Crespel, Horn—who in the spring had obtained a civic appointment—and Riese doubtless contributed largely to the pleasures of the time. Alas, there was a lack of friends of another stamp; Merck far away, there were none to sympathise with his zealous efforts in art, to help him on by penetrating criticism of his literary work, and by like aspiration.

*Götz von Berlichingen*, that glorious reflection of the German spirit, the first German drama which could take a place beside the first German comedy, Lessing's *Minna*, had meanwhile been everywhere received with the greatest acclamation. The sale of copies, however, which had fallen on its unnamed young author's shoulders since Merck's departure, was giving him a great deal of trouble. Praise did not dazzle him; *Götz* he thought of as a mere trial piece of his genius, which must pursue the ever-lengthening path of its development. Instead of ransacking further the Middle Age Knightdom, to make it live again in a drama like *Götz*, he obeyed the impulse to

<sup>1</sup> See the letter (dated—erroneously, Herr Düntzer believes—[October 1773]): to Helene Elizabeth Jacobi, in Düsseldorf. *Der junge Goethe*, i. 390. The three ladies had gone when Goethe wrote that letter to Kestner, September 15.—Tr.

<sup>2</sup> In his letter to Demars, already quoted. *Der junge Goethe*, i. 374.—Tr.

another literary form, to the moulding of material supplied by his own experience. "Now I am at a novel, but it is slow work," he writes on the 15th of September to Kestner. "And a drama for the boards, in order that the fellows may see that, if I please, I can observe rules, and portray morality and sentimentality."<sup>1</sup> The novel was to set forth his own position as a lover while at Wetzlar, which he had at first thought to give a dramatic form to.<sup>2</sup> What drama in accordance with ordinary stage requirement he has in mind we do not know. "Just a word in confidence as an author," he adds. "My Ideals grow daily in beauty and greatness; and, if my vigour leaves me not and my love, there shall yet be much account made of my loves, and the public, too, shall yield its sympathy." After this one can understand what he had already said in the same letter:—"I completely humour my father now; he tries to enmesh me more every day in the civic affairs, and I let be. While my strength is still mine, one tear! and all sevenfold hempen cords are in twain." (*Ein Riss! und all die siebenfachen Bastseile sind entzwey.*) Only while his genius suffers it will he continue at the lawyer-work he dislikes so much. He adds:—"I am much more easy-tempered, and see that everywhere you can find the human, everywhere largeness and pettiness, the beautiful and the hateful. And then I am working away stoutly, and hope to push on in all sorts of ways this winter." (*Und denke den Winter allerlei zu fördern.*) To the beginning of October (1773) falls the powerful poem *Prometheus*, in which the Greek fable receives this turning: that through the impulsion of his own genius the artist does his great things.

<sup>1</sup> "Jetzt arbeit' ich einen Roman, es geht aber langsam. Und ein Drama fürs Aufführen damit die Kerls sehen, dass nur an mir liegt, Regeln zu beobachten und Sittlichkeit, Empfindsamkeit darzustellen." *Der junge Goethe*, i. 381.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> See the letter to Kestner of July 19, 1773, already quoted.—TR.

What specially weighed on him at this period was the threatening loss of his sister; he writes to Kestner—"I lose much in losing her, she understands and bears with my humours."<sup>1</sup> Then there was anxiety about her future, for when Schlosser went to Karlsruhe the fixed appointment which had been promised was not at once given to him: he was kept in suspense. Of his own worldly advancement Goethe thought least; it was opposite to his disposition to hunt after connections with powerful persons; he sought only the intimacy of really significant men, whose intellects and hearts could give him the aid he desired, but he sought it only as he felt that he was welcome. And it was a great joy to him that many came to see him as they passed through Frankfurt: he always counted it a special merit of his native city that through it ran the best route of so many travellers.

Of his old Strassburg friends one that had again drawn near to him was Lenz. Goethe had discussed with him the adaptations from Plautus, and had introduced them to a Leipzig publisher. (About his own writings he has as yet treated with no publisher, he had not even applied to the booksellers of his acquaintance. Now, after the success of *Götz*, came an offer from the Weygand firm, which he used, in the first instance, on his friend's behalf.) When the copy of *Götz* came to Lenz, he sent to Goethe an essay *On Our Marriage* (*Ueber unsere Ehe*), in which, after comparing the genius of himself and of his friend with pretty and humorous turnings, he urges that there should be the most intimate union between them. The printing of the comedies from Plautus had begun when Goethe wrote as follows to Salzmann:—"You have not this long time heard anything of me from myself, probably, however, all sorts of news of me from Lenz and some of our friends. I push on continually with my task, for the

<sup>1</sup> In the letter of September 15, 1773, so often quoted already.—TR.

Plautine comedies begin to make their appearance. But won't Lenz write to me? I have something for him on my heart." Then he requests Salzmann to send a copy of *Götz* to Sessenheim addressed "*An Mssl. Brion*;" it will be some comfort to poor Friederike that the faithless lover is poisoned.<sup>1</sup> Salzmann and Friederike were on friendly terms. Another connection was that which Goethe now formed with the mystic-pious Lavater. Lavater knew by May (1773) that Goethe had written the notice (see p. 203) of *Aussichten in die Ewigkeit*, and that he was thinking of a journey to Switzerland. In Physiognomy they were soon to find a special bond of union.

About the 10th of October (1773), Schönborn, the ex-secretary of Count Bernstorff, the secretary at present of the Danish Consulate in Algiers, came to Frankfurt on his way to the scene of his new activity. Schönborn was a native of Schleswig. He was twelve years Goethe's senior, and was on friendly terms with Klopstock, Gerstenberg, and Claudius. He had a letter for Goethe from Boie, whom he had just learned to know in Göttingen. At the Frankfurt inn he met, by chance, in the evening, Professor Höpfner, who was expecting Goethe. Thus was the acquaintance immediately made. "We spend every day together," writes Schönborn on the 12th to Gerstenberg. "His bearing is serious and melancholy, through which yet often breaks sudden shimmer of comic, laughing, satiric humour. He is very eloquent, and overflows with ideas which are very witty. Indeed he possesses, so far as I know him, an exceedingly intuitive poetic power, which feels its way through and through to the centre of objects, so that in his intellect everything becomes local and individual. Everything with him is metamorphosed into the dramatic.

<sup>1</sup> Goethe to Salzmann [October or November 1773:—"Meine Schwester heurathet nach Carlsruh."—*Trans.*] *Der junge Goethe*, i. 385.

—Tr.



He seems to work with extreme facility ; now he is working at a drama called *Prometheus*, of which he has read to me two acts, in which there are thoroughly noble passages springing from the depths of Nature." (Gerstenberg thought from this that the drama was not yet finished.) "He draws and paints well. His room is full of beautiful casts of the best antiques. His desire is to go to Italy to have a good look round at all the works of art." Goethe also read to Schönborn the farces on Wieland and the Jacobis, these, however, he would not print. There was no talk of *Faust*, which as yet only hovered before him. Schönborn met the friendliest reception in the Goethes' house. He encouraged Goethe to enclose a few lines, dated October 18, to Gerstenberg, and to send to Claudius some little contributions for the *Wandsbecker Bote*.

At last, in October 1773, Schlosser was able to return as Court and Government Councillor (*Hof- und Regierungsrath*) to the Markgraf of Baden. On the 13th the formal betrothal was celebrated. "You know what I had in my sister," writes Goethe to Tante Fahlmer in Düsseldorf. "Yet what matters it? an honest fellow must learn to bear everything." He also confides to her that he is working at many things, but has nothing completed. So the work which was to present the circumstances of his Wetzlar love had not been getting on very well. But "A beautiful new plan has developed in my soul for a great drama;" he will only first see whether he can learn anything from the praise or blame awarded to *Götz*.<sup>1</sup> The "new plan" was probably the now resumed subject, *Julius Cæsar*, of which he had spoken to Schönborn. But he found himself unable to dispose the mighty material.

Not so with a merry dialogue to pay off Wieland. *Der Deutsche Merkur* had been founded at the beginning of the

<sup>1</sup> Goethe to Johanna Fahlmer in Düsseldorf, October 18, 1773. *Der junge Goethe*, i. 386-7.—TR.

year by Wieland and the Jacobis, to Goethe's mind only as an unworthy money speculation. Goethe had, from time to time, been much irritated by its articles, and was especially enraged by the editor's letters on Wieland's operetta *Alceste*, comparing it with Euripides's tragedy. On a Sunday afternoon his mood impelled him to write the farce *Götter Helden und Wieland*, which he threw off rapidly with a bottle of Burgundy beside him,<sup>1</sup> and then sent to Lenz.

On the 1st of November (1773) his sister was married. There was no lack of bridal poems and festal addresses; but not from Wolfgang: he could not play the smiling congratulator on an occasion so fraught with sad consequence to himself; he was too deeply grieved. His correspondence with Düsseldorf had meanwhile gone on briskly. He had expressed his hearty sympathy in the birth of a little daughter to Betti.<sup>2</sup> She thanks him with earnest friendship as soon as her health allows; but could not suppress the wish that her friend might no longer stand in such opposition to her husband and her brother-in-law. "I would fain not write to you, best lady, in my present humour, and yet would fain say to you what pleasure your letter has given me. I felt with intense vividness your voice, your being about me; and you must feel how dear to me your presence is. Already have I stood an hour and mirrored myself in your letter, and am at your bed-side, and—but good-night, best lady. When I cannot speak with you from the heart, better silence."<sup>3</sup> It was impossible to say to her that he must, notwithstanding so dear a mediator, decline all connection with the Jacobis, because of what he

<sup>1</sup> See the *Goethe-Jahrbuch* for 1881, p. 381 (*top*).—TR.

<sup>2</sup> Goethe to Helene Elizabeth Jacobi in Düsseldorf, 3d November 1773. *Der junge Goethe*, i. 392.—TR.

<sup>3</sup> Goethe to Helene Jacobi, November 7, 1773. *Der junge Goethe*, i. 393.—TR.

knew of them, and because of the way in which they had spoken of him. *His heart* had not yet interceded for these two men, though the women, his dear friends, might cherish the firm conviction that they must and would love each other. Thus this attempt to bring together Goethe and the Jacobis was as unsuccessful as that of Johanna Fahlmer to bring together Goethe and Wieland.

The departure of his sister on the 14th of November made a great rift in Goethe's life. But then pleasant letters from the dear ones thus removed, and the correspondence with Betti and Tante, did much to cheer him. Still, as ever, drawing and poetry filled up his best hours. Besides, he was working at *Erwin und Elmire*—a comedy with songs, the subject of which he borrowed from a ballad in Goldsmith's *Vicar—Edwin and Angelina*; he had almost finished the little piece, and was in treaty with the players about it. As he himself observes, it was manufactured without any great expense of feeling or intellect for the horizon of the Frankfurt players and stages, and yet they could not act it.<sup>1</sup> The silk-manufacturer, Johann André of Offenbach had undertaken to set the songs to music; his own operetta *Der Töpfer* had been produced with great applause in Frankfurt. He was eight years older than Goethe, who had grown intimate with him. Indeed, André having ventured to publish his operetta in score, Goethe, through Tante Fahlmer, had made a vain endeavour to get a kindly notice from Wieland's *Merkur* of the modest little work.<sup>2</sup> Beside this comedy *Erwin und Elmire*, Goethe was brooding on "some more important pieces," which "he was laying down in their ground work," and "studying over."<sup>3</sup> *Julius*

<sup>1</sup> Goethe to Kestner [end of 1773? *Merck is back—Trans.*] *Der junge Goethe*, i. 383 (*top of page*).—TR.

<sup>2</sup> In a letter despatched October 31, 1773. *Der junge Goethe*, i. 389.—TR.

<sup>3</sup> See the letter to Kestner last referred to. *Der junge Goethe*, i. 383.—TR.

*Cæsar* he found impracticable ; the following in a letter to Boie refers to this subject :—"The sacrifice is prepared ; now only flame and wind-gust is lacking ; but that depends on the gods." To lyrical poetry he just now felt no impulse ; only a few epigrams came unsought.

Still was the resolve to follow the voice of his genius, not to spend himself in practical life, firm as ever. Kestner having expressed a hope that he will perhaps yet come to live near them, he replies on Christmas morning, 1773 :—"Ah ! that has been my dream ever since you went away. But it will probably remain a dream. My father would indeed not oppose it were I going into foreign service ; nor does either love or hope of a civic appointment keep me here ;" (he could not be a member of the Council so long as his uncle Textor was one) "and so might I not, think you, venture to try once more how things look out in the world. But, Kestner, the talents and powers which I have I need far too much for my own purposes ; it has been always my way to act only as my instinct guides, and not thus can any prince be served. And then how soon should I learn politic subordination ! They are a cursed set the Frankfurters ; President von Möser will say, 'You can't use their obstinate heads for any purpose.' Even were this not so, of all my talents my jurisprudence is one of the least ; my little stock of theory and human intelligence won't make up for that. Here in Frankfurt my legal practice and knowledge advance hand in hand ; I learn every day, and scrape my way along (*haudere mich weiter*). But in a *Justizcollegium* ! I have always been careful not to play a game when I was the least experienced at the table."<sup>1</sup>

To his extremest joy, Merck at length returned (December 1773) from his St. Petersburg journey. "He came eight days

<sup>1</sup> Goethe to Kestner, Christmas Day [1773]. *Der junge Goethe*, i. 400-401.—Tr.

earlier than I had expected," writes Goethe in the letter quoted above, "and was sitting with my father in the room; I come home; without knowing anything I enter, and hear his voice before I see him. You know me, Lotte!" Merck had come back the old true friend still. What an infinite deal each had to confide, and what prospects of enduring harmonious fellowship in work opened before them! On the very first evening they had a "strange scene." Lavater had sent Goethe a silhouette which was very like Lotte.<sup>1</sup> The two friends went on from this to talk of her in ardent passages of praise.

As to the publishing of *Götz*, Goethe now took on him to supply the booksellers; in fact, to be himself the publisher.<sup>2</sup> To compensate Merck, Goethe was probably to pay a part of the cost of printing; he had paid for the paper some time before with borrowed money. The penuriousness of his father compelled him to borrow small sums several times afterwards. The supply of copies was meantime exhausted, so that a new edition was needed. Deinet undertook this. A large honorarium was not in question; in a starched preface, Deinet promises a "quite correct edition," a promise which, alas! he did not keep. Only some printer's errors are set right; some new ones have intruded: the changes by Goethe himself are but few.

At this time came the pleasurable news that Maximiliane von Laroche was to marry the merchant Brentano of Frankfurt at the commencement of the new year (1774). "Her future husband seems to be a man with whom it is possible to live," Goethe writes in the cheeriest mood to Betti Jacobi; "and so huzza! another added to the number of worthy beings who are anything but intellectual, as you indeed must guess. For between ourselves, inasmuch as it is on this earth such a

<sup>1</sup> *Der junge Goethe*, i. 383.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> Goethe to Boie, January 8, 1774. *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 3.—TR.



very critical matter with acquaintanceships, and friendships, and loves, (since often when you think you have it by the four corners, slap comes the devil and tears a hole in the middle, and spills it all out. As it has lately happened with myself, which has put me out very much). And so, to return to my text, I am far more active than before to seek out where anything of love, friendship, and goodness may lie hidden; and am in good humour because of all sorts of unexpected qualities I find, etc.; so that sometimes I have stood on the verge of falling in love. But that God prevent! On any falling-out of misfortune, however, *Mamagen* shall be immediately written to.”<sup>1</sup> The dreary tangle of jealousy and strife in which this marriage would involve him he did not foresee. Nor does it seem to have been forced on his mind what an incongruous couple were—through the matchmaking talent of Dean Dumeix—to be joined as husband and wife.

The Milanese, Peter Anton Brentano, was a widower—still young, indeed; but already the father of five children. If he could, as Goethe once said,<sup>2</sup> pinch all his friendliness tight between his sharp nose and sharp chin, it was yet impossible that he should satisfy the heart of the maiden of eighteen, who loved bright cheerfulness and the pleasures of friendly living. He indeed was in the best circumstances, and intimate with the families of most consequence; but a life in the gloomy house, where you wound your way between casks of herrings, and piled-up cheeses, and then the constant preoccupation of her dry husband with business,—surely these things must soon be an intolerable weariness to the young wife.

<sup>1</sup> Goethe to Helene Elizabeth Jacobi, December 31, 1773. *Der junge Goethe*, i. 403-4. *Mamagen*=Little Mama=Betti Jacobi.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> In a letter to Frau von La Roche, 20th November 1774. *Loeper*, p. 85. A portion only of that letter is reprinted in *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 43, 44.—TR.

## CHAPTER V.

WERTHER—LAVATER—JACOBI—GREAT DESIGNS.

THE YEAR 1774.

VERY odd must have been the feelings of the young doctor (for doctor he was in general called, and he spoke of himself by that title, even on an official occasion) when he went in his scarlet, gold-lace coat to pay his New Year's visit of the year of hope 1774 at the house of Brentano's relative, Mayor Reuss. On the 8th of January he went to supper there; there was excellent eating, and a great deal of wine drunk; he sat until one o'clock in the morning, "between Houris," and they "fed each other with spoons." On the 9th, the day on which Max was married in the castle chapel of Ehrenbreitstein, he went through the ice; over this mishap he makes merry in a letter written later in the day to Tante and Betti, in Düsseldorf.<sup>1</sup>

At last, on Jan. 15th, the newly-married couple, with Mama Sophie, came to Frankfurt. And Goethe was drawn into the topsy-turvy, motley, social gaiety which ensued. Merck, who came to see the Laroche in Frankfurt, felt much anger about this extraordinary marriage. "You should have seen Frau von La Roche," he writes to his wife, "how she stood the conversations and the jokes of these vulgar business people, endured their expensive dinners, entertained their heavy selves.

<sup>1</sup> *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 4.—TR.

There have been horrid scenes, and I do not know whether she will not succumb beneath the load of repentance. Goethe is already an intimate family friend, he plays with the children and accompanies the young wife's piano-playing with his violoncello. Herr Brentano, though pretty jealous for an Italian, loves him, and thoroughly desires that he should continue to visit the house." But immediately after this the young poet was so grossly insulted by Brentano that he never crossed that threshold again. On the other hand he wrote on Jan. 21st inviting dear Mama to a "great sight." If she can come, she and Brentano's urchins shall be fetched to-morrow immediately after dinner by his mother, who will go in the coach for them. To her surprise that he does not come to the house, he replies on the same day:—"If you knew what went on within me before I resolved to shun the house you would not hope to lure me back, dear Mama; I have in those terrible moments suffered for all my time to be; I am calm, and leave me in my calm! 'That I would not see you indoors, what all the people would say, etc.'—I have made up my mind to the endurance of all that. And God preserve him [Brentano] from the only thing which would make me cross his threshold"<sup>1</sup> [cruel treatment of his young wife].

The "great sight" was a pantomimic dance on the ice, performed in the presence of many ladies at the Rödelheim meadows, by the Nidda. The ladies drove a good distance from the town, then alighted and went along beside a wall across frozen ground; then followed a little water-course bordered by willows, and suddenly heard music and exclamation. Immediately ten skaters flew across and gave them friendly hands to help them over the dyke. There were little benches and tables spread with plenty of chocolate, coffee, wine, and eatables; there were planks on the ice to prevent the sitters' feet

<sup>1</sup> See *Loefer*, pp. 25, 29, for these letters.—TR.

from getting very cold, and there was lively music. All the skaters were in short fur cloaks, and wore cowled caps.<sup>1</sup> At this time, as on earlier occasions, Sophie gave the young poet some of her *Briefe Rosaliens* to look through for her; his praise of them pleased her, and she profited by his critical remarks; he added some things which she had told him while driving together, but which she had omitted from the *Briefe*. Herr von Laroche came for his wife. Goethe welcomed the influential husband of his motherly friend; but not in Brentano's house, which he never entered again. On the last day of January (1774) the two left for Thalehrenbreitstein.

In the period of calm thus ushered in the misfortune of the young wife, who might have made life so sweet to him, pressed on his mind in all its dreadfulness, and impelled him to the composition of *Werther*. He set to work on the 1st of February (1774), the very day after the departure of the Laroches. In the first part of *Werther* he moulded into vivid realisation (*Vergegenwärtigung*) and artistic form his own Wetzlar love; in the second he allowed his imagination free play with the incidents of the story of poor Jerusalem. He shut himself as far as possible from external intercourse, that he might rapidly bring to completeness the poem that had so long been growing in his mind. The young wife he only met at a third place,—Dumeix's house generally. "Goethe will not go to Switzerland," writes Merck gloomily to his wife on February 14 (1774). "The great success of his drama has turned his head a little. He is shut up from all his friends, and only exists in the writings which he is preparing for the public. He must have success in all he undertakes, and I

<sup>1</sup> From *Rosaliens Briefe*, ii. No. 77, quoted in *Loeper*, p. 26. It was on this occasion that the incident of borrowing his mother's cloak to skate in occurred. See *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, xvi. *Buch*, at the close of the section beginning:—"Glückliche Kinder und Jünglinge."—TR.

foresee that a novel which is to appear at Easter will be as well received as his drama has been. Besides, he has to console the young Frau Brentano for the smell of the oil and of cheese, and the behaviour of her husband." Goethe had neither confided to Merck exacter information about *Werther*, nor told him of Brentano's base insult. In writing to Düsseldorf, too, he gives no hint of the latter, rather he describes Brentano as a worthy man of open, frank, strong character, keenness of understanding, and excellent business acquirement.<sup>1</sup> To the young unhappy wife he confided that he was writing a novel with Jerusalem's fate as a basis. As he writes to Mama Sophie, returning two *Briefe Rosaliens*, with criticisms on the better disposal and connection of parts, he observes that after her departure (in June 1774, he tells her *the next day after*) he began the novel; that he had not before planned to make a single whole out of the subject.<sup>2</sup> Writing on the 13th of February to the friend most nearly concerned, to Kestner, he gives a dark hint of the task he is engaged at.<sup>3</sup> On the 12th he had sent to Bürger a copy of the second edition of *Götz*. Bürger's friend, the Lübeck Secretary of Council Tesdorpf, of

<sup>1</sup> Goethe to Helene Elizabeth Jacobi [February 8th or 9th?—*Trans.* (*Three weeks and a half from the 15th of January 1774*)]. *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 5, 6.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> Letter not in *Der junge Goethe*. See *Loeper*, p. 35 :—"Das liebe Weibgen hat Ihnen was von einer Arbeit geschrieben die ich angefangen habe seit Sie weg sind, wirklich angefangen—denn ich hatte nie die Idee aus dem Sujet ein einzelnes Ganze zu machen." See also *Loeper*, p. 42, "als Sie weg waren *den andern Tag*."—TR.

<sup>3</sup> *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 9 :—"How often I am with you, that is in the past, you will, perhaps, soon receive a document to witness." (*March* is guessed at as the date of this letter in *Der junge Goethe*. In the first lines of it Goethe remonstrates with Kestner for his tardiness in writing. "Only to get on the 13th of February a reply to a letter written on Christmas Day." Probably, therefore, *this* letter is written on or very soon after the 13th.—TR.)



the same age as Goethe, had, when going to Wetzlar, called on Goethe in Frankfurt, had been his companion on the ice. "My heart is lost to that beautiful soul," writes Goethe to Bürger. What Tesdorpf had told him of Bürger impels him to break through the "paper wall of partition between them." "Our voices have often met, and our hearts too," he writes. "Is not life short and barren enough? shall they not take hand whose ways lie together?" He desires that henceforth they lay their work before each other; that gives courage.<sup>1</sup> In this period, from which a large number of letters have been preserved, the first part of *Werther* was completed. And to this period probably belongs the story in *Dichtung und Wahrheit*,<sup>2</sup> how one evening before going to rest he laid a well-sharpened dagger by his bed, and tried, while the light was yet unextinguished, whether he could plunge it into his breast.

*Werther* was at latest completed by the beginning of March 1774. Immediately he wrote to Lotte that she had been this whole time of silence more with him than perhaps ever, and he will have it printed for her as soon as possible.<sup>3</sup> But he did not make up his mind so easily for all that. Lenz had meanwhile, without the poet's knowledge, had the farce on Wieland printed at Kehl.<sup>4</sup> Goethe sends a copy on the 6th of March (1774) to some Leipzig friend, probably Krebel. *Götz*, he writes, shall as his trial piece remain unaltered. "If I ever again write a German drama, which I think very doubtful, all true souls may then see how far I am improved. On the whole, I am very busy, not to say diligent; keep up my advocate work, and yet put together many a bit of work of good intelligence and feeling. Just now I have nothing ready for printing. . . . If you see Lessing, tell him that I had

<sup>1</sup> Goethe to Bürger, Feb. 12, 1774. *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 8.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> xiii. Buch.—TR.

<sup>3</sup> *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 11.—TR.

<sup>4</sup> See the *Goethe-Jahrbuch* for 1881, p. 381.—TR.

reckoned on him, and I am accustomed not to make mistakes as to my people.”<sup>1</sup> He did not guess how extremely ill-disposed Lessing was towards him, notwithstanding his genius.

In *Werther*, the second splendid revelation of his intellect and soul, Goethe had once for all unburdened himself of his whole gloomy life-weariness. But precisely at this time young Frau Brentano excited a passion in him which he earnestly combated, avoiding all places where he might meet her. “Your dear ones I have not seen for some time back; I had my heart spoiled. No, dear Mama, you have my hand on it, I will be good.”<sup>2</sup> What strength of self-conquest speaks in those words!

Drawing was practised now with the greatest zeal, nor did there lack times of overflowing spirits, composition-impelling. Then were written the *Prolog* to Bahrdt’s translation of the New Testament, and a farce on the Jacobis. Höpfner writes on the 23d of April (1774) to Professor Raspe in Cassel:—“The last time I stopped with the man in Frankfurt (for you must know that he is my friend), he read aloud to me an excellent thing he has begun, *Das Unglück der Jacobis*. When finished, you too shall have it. The two Jacobis are soundly chastised in it. Would you get me some nice plaster casts of antiques for Goethe.” Some lyrical poems, too, fall to this spring of 1774.

About this time the much maligned Spinoza was beginning to sway the young poet by an extraordinary attraction and influence. His teaching: God Himself cannot change His laws, His creatures cannot deviate from the laws of their being; the

<sup>1</sup> *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 15, 16 (this letter is there printed with the date May 6, 1774, which must be a misreading of the MS. for March 6; for Goethe tells his friend to look out for a certain comedy at the Easter fair; now Easter Sunday 1774 fell on April 3).—TR.

<sup>2</sup> Goethe to Frau von La Roche, March 1774. See *Loeper*, p. 37.—TR.

primary virtue is to maintain oneself in one's Being; the distinctions of good from bad are only arbitrary ordinances; the philosophers have taken the impress of their conceptions for the thing itself—all this harmonised with Goethe's temper, who felt impelled to the freest development of Nature working in him so mightily. The boundless, illuminating Disinterestedness of Spinoza's *Ethics* was accordant with his way of acting only as nature prompted. We do not know whether he was first led to Spinoza at this time (it came about through the hateful execration of the great philosopher by the Lutheran preacher, Coler), at any rate it was at this time that what he read himself out of Spinoza worked a great calm in the restless soul yearning after a higher consolation.

So equipped, he could withstand with confidence all attempts to convert him. His pious friend, Fräulein Klettenberg, did not plague him with anxious cares for his salvation, for she believed that the Saviour would reveal Himself to her young friend as the One crucified for his sins, as, eighteen years ago, He had revealed Himself to her. But his Swiss friends were more urgent, and most of all the confidential friend and colleague of Lavater, Pfenninger. When Pfenninger would by proofs convince Goethe of the truth of revelation, Goethe answers:—"All which seems opposition between us is only a strife of words which comes of my perceiving things in other combination, expressing their relativity after other fashion, naming them by other names;" the only evidences which he values, loves, ay adores, are those which bring it home to him how thousands—or *one*—before him have felt what now is to him bracing and strength. And so to him the word of men is the Word of God, let who will have collected it and enrolled it as a canon. "And with fervent soul I fall on my brother's neck—Moses! Prophet! Evangelist! Apostle! Spinoza or Machiavelli! yet can find it in me too to say to

each :—Dear friend, it is nevertheless with thee as with me ! in the single and particular thou dost feel powerfully and gloriously, as little into thy head as into mine goes the stupendous All.”<sup>1</sup>

Lavater’s studies in physiognomy were very interesting to Goethe, so long in the habit of drawing portraits and outlining silhouettes. And now had come the bookseller Steiner, bringing from Lavater, his brother-in-law, greeting and message for Goethe. Goethe had once sent to Lavater thirteen silhouettes, among them one of Herder ; and Lavater had portrait-sketches by Goethe too in his possession, before Herder directed him to Goethe as a draughtsman from whom to collect. As draughtsman Goethe is more the man, the painter Füssli more the poet. Now Goethe sends a sketch of the profile of one who has been a pilot, who has endured much in slavery at Tunis, and who wanders about endeavouring to rouse compassion. He promises too to send a manuscript, the printing of which is to wait a while ; it is the history of a dear young fellow to whose actual afflictions the writer has lent his own emotions, and thus it makes a strange whole. “I am not slack,” he says at the close, in vivid certainty that he is conforming to his nature ; “so long as I am on the earth do I conquer at least my pace of ground a day.”<sup>2</sup>

While the fame of the writer of *Götz* rose ever higher—the piece was performed in Berlin on April 14 and the five nights following amid great applause—his Frankfurt life was very happy. Now sprang up many fresh songs and isolated *Spruchgedichte*. Intercourse with Merck had, for the time, almost completely ceased. For the death of the *Landgräfin*

<sup>1</sup> Goethe to Lavater and Pfenninger, April 26, 1774. *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 13-15.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> Goethe to Lavater and Pfenninger, April 26, 1774, the letter already referred to above.—TR.

on the 29th of March 1774 had been a great shock to Merck; his appointment as Councillor of War had imposed new work upon him, and a little later he went to Switzerland to bring home his family. But new members were added to Goethe's little band of friends. The most important was Klinger.

When Klinger came back from Giessen he had failed to obtain the appointment as actuary he had hoped for. Then he gave himself altogether to poetry, disregarding his incomeless condition. The work of Klinger stands forth in sharp definite forms, is not sustained by intense energy of moulding imagination, or by profundity of soul. But a like impulse towards freedom, towards the overthrow of conventional boundaries, imbibed too by Klinger from the same source—from Rousseau—a like instinct to give this impulse voice in dramatic form, and, moreover, a serious, noble, self-reliant way of thinking, united him with Goethe. The Doctor of Klinger's play *Das Leidende Weib* represents Goethe. There it is said of him—"The first of men, so far as I have yet seen men. The only one with whom I can exist. He carries affairs in his bosom. Posterity will wonder that ever such a man was."

Beside Klinger we name Philipp Christoph Kayser, born March 10, 1755, son of the Organist of the Church of St. Catherine. After having pursued wider and higher culture under Sorge in Lobenstein for a year, he had returned in 1770 to be a teacher of music in Frankfurt. He was a most intimate friend of Klinger. Lavater ascribes to him—"Purity and stress of deep emotion, with the least affectation." He was inspired with the greatest enthusiasm for Goethe, imitating him in everything—even in handwriting.

Crespel was again an extremely active member of the circle which throughout the summer assembled every Friday for little



excursions and picnics. We know from Goethe's narrative,<sup>1</sup> how the *Mariage-spiel* which Crespel introduced, decreed that the same young lady fell to Goethe several times running, at whose wish he wrote *Clavigo* in a week. The maiden, Anna Sybilla, the younger daughter of the merchant Münch, was only on the verge of her seventeenth year; last winter her elder sister, Susanna Magdalena, had won Goethe at dice, and he had named her "little wife" (*Weibchen*).<sup>2</sup> The day on which he fulfilled his promise by reading the completed *Clavigo* aloud was the Friday before Pentecost, the 20th of May 1774.

Though *Clavigo* cannot rank with *Götz* and *Werther*, yet in it the poet had done quite unexpectedly what he had long intended, he had given a proof of his power working within the traditional contracted form of the drama to touch and rouse the spirit. And however much he borrowed from the *Memoirs of Beaumarchais*, on which his play is founded, he had moulded the matter by his art to vivid effect, and in the character of one creation quite his own—Carlos—had given an imperishable masterpiece. The charming relation to the maiden who was his consort on all their days of pleasure-taking soon became well-known, and was very welcome to his parents. For some time, too, he himself seems to have been anything but averse to the thought of leading the dear maiden a wife to the great parental house. A weight of anxiety had been lifted from him when, shortly before the *Clavigo* episode, word came that Lotte had been safely delivered of a boy.<sup>3</sup> Mama Sophie came to Frankfurt on a three weeks' visit, which began about the middle of May; he saw her frequently at his own home, where, on the sofa which was kept ready for her, she had him read aloud and talk to her; and he met her, too, at the houses of common friends, especially at Dumeix's house;

<sup>1</sup> *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, xv. Buch.—TR.      <sup>2</sup> See page 209.—TR.

<sup>3</sup> Goethe to Kestner [May 1774]. *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 16-17.—TR.

in the dean's fine garden he found much pleasure in sowing, and tying, and hoeing, and other garden tasks. Brentano's house and young wife he avoided still as before.

On the 25th of May 1774 he was delighted to get a long letter from friend Schönborn in Algeria. One item in this letter—that Klopstock was going to ask Goethe for some of his works through Boie, caused Goethe to communicate immediately direct with the famed poet. "Should I," he wrote, "not address him while still living, whose grave, if dead, I would visit as a pilgrim." He sent to Klopstock the farce *Das Urtheil der Jacobis*, which was not to be printed, so that he should be glad to have it back. And so soon as some things now lying ready are printed, he will either send them to Klopstock, or let him know of them at least.<sup>1</sup>

In the night between the 28th and 29th of May Goethe gave manful assistance in putting out a fire in the Jews' quarter; here he grew strengthened in his conviction that the so-called "common" people are the best human beings.<sup>2</sup> On the 30th of May he was at the golden wedding of the Schweitzer-Allesinas; he danced in the 31st, the birthday of Maximiliane Brentano, to whom he only gave an arm once for a few moments.<sup>3</sup>

On the 1st of June Goethe writes to his friend in Algeria an account of all his latest compositions; besides he has invented some plans for great dramas, *i.e.* found the interesting details for them in Nature and in his own heart. His *Cæsar* seems, too, to be forming, yet this will not please Schönborn<sup>4</sup> [because not treated as the mood of the "Freedom" advocates

<sup>1</sup> Goethe to Klopstock, 28th May 1774. *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 20.—Tr.

<sup>2</sup> Goethe to Schönborn, June 1, 1774. *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 21.—Tr.

<sup>3</sup> Goethe to Frau von La Roche, beginning of June 1774. *Loeper*, p. 41.—Tr.

<sup>4</sup> *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 22.—Tr.

would have it]. In an addition to the letter on June 8, Goethe speaks with great enthusiasm of Herder's *Aelteste Urkunde des Menschengeschlechts*, and writing further on the 10th, says that Klopstock's *Gelehrtenrepublik* has infused new life into his veins. In it "the holy wells of creative feeling flow pure from the throne of Nature." In neither work did Goethe make a stumblingblock (as many did) of the external form, but filled himself with the spirit. He had given the first part of *Werther* to Mama Sophie to read, and she, intent, as mostly women are, on moral effect, thought this glowing presentation of passion dangerous. "I have kissed your letter and pressed it to my heart," he replies. "They are my own inmost feelings. Yes, dear Mama, it is true: fire that gives light and warmth you call a blessing from God; that which consumes you call a curse. Blessing then and curse! Have I indeed greater obligation to serve you than Nature considered it had to serve me? Am I not lighted, am I not warmed, *and* consumed! Call me wicked but love me."

"*Un livre croyez moi n'est pas fort dangereux.* The good and the bad rustle by the ears which listen not. And is not the Bad good and is not the Good bad? Do I hate Wieland? do I love him? It is in truth all one and the same; he interests me."<sup>1</sup>

When soon after she asked for the second part of the novel he informed her that he had had to send it in haste to be printed, nor had he thought her in a position to follow his emotion, imagination, humours.<sup>2</sup> The bookseller Weygand had called immediately after the Easter Fair to ask whether he had nothing original to be published; this he regarded as an intimation from Destiny to keep back his *Werther* no longer;

<sup>1</sup> Goethe to Frau von La Roche, June 1774. *Loeper*, p. 44.—Tr.

<sup>2</sup> Goethe to Frau von La Roche, middle of June 1774. *Loeper*, pp. 46-7.—Tr.

but first *Clavigo* should go. *Clavigo* was the first work to which he put his name; he did not intend to put it to *Werther*. So soon as the 16th of June he writes to Lotte, who had sent him greeting through a friend going to the baths:—"I will send you as soon as possible a friend who is very like myself, and I hope you will give him a good reception; his name is Werther, and is and was—but that he may himself declare to you."<sup>1</sup>

Lavater had already announced that he was coming soon, to Goethe's delight. And Merck and his family had come back; Goethe did not guess in what mood! The poor husband had discovered the unfaithfulness of his wife, but had softened to receive the fallen one back to his home. Moreover since the death of the *Landgräfin* his place had become extremely unpleasant, through the now complete power of the President von Möser his enemy. Merck seriously thought of trying to get an appointment in Berlin through Nicolai's help.

Meanwhile Goethe continued to avoid the unhappy Max Brentano; she felt it bitterly. "Believe me," he replied to her mother, "the sacrifice I make for your Max's sake in seeing her no more is worth more than the assiduity of the most ardent lover, in that it is really assiduity. I will not reckon up what it has cost me; for it is a capital which will yield interest to both of us."<sup>2</sup> And the good Tante Fahlmer in whom he had such great confidence, now a considerable time back from Düsseldorf, he avoided in consequence of a report heard from Mama Sophie. During Frau von Laroche's stay in Frankfurt she had not visited this lady, whom Jacobi calls "dear, loving, melancholy" (*liebe, liebevolle, schwermüthige*). The poet remained in the closest communion with Fräulein Klettenberg, whose portrait he drew for Lavater. "She will

<sup>1</sup> *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 27 (foot).—TR.

<sup>2</sup> Goethe to Frau von La Roche, June 16, 1774. *Loeper*, p. 50.—TR.

be more to thee than I," he had written, "though she is as much to me as to thee ; yet am I ever in my zealous unbelief the ME! and, as I am, thy Brother."<sup>1</sup> Fräulein Klettenberg had said to Lavater (whose faith did not seem to her the right faith, of inward *experience*) that she hoped Goethe too would yet feel that God was in Christ. "He walks with Lavater and with Goethe ; I know Him by His gait ; yet are their eyes holden that they do not know Him."<sup>2</sup>

On the 23d of June 1774 Lavater accompanied by Schmoll, his draughtsman of physiognomy, entered the Goethes' house, heartily welcomed by the family. His exterior was repellent ; a flat chest which gave something crane-like to the bearing of the long lank man ; a large nose ; a sharp chin ; a brow bulging above, rather re-entrant below, valleyed just over the nose, pushing forward above the eyes ; a sweetly smiling mouth ; rolling eyes cast upwards ; such is the catalogue. But all this was of no account before that irresistible personality. Even Merck acknowledged that few had made such an edifying impression on him as this extraordinarily good man. Lavater himself describes his first meeting with Goethe—"Are you he? I am he! Unspeakably sweet indescribable entrance of Reality—very like, and unlike Expectation. All was mind and truth that Goethe spoke with me. In a pretty large social gathering said Goethe once to me :—"So soon as one is in company, one takes the key from the heart and pockets it ; those who leave it in the door are dolts.' Much did he read aloud to me from his papers, and read—read ! you would have sworn he was speaking these very things for the first time in the fire with me. His work—oh scenes full of truth—of the truest human nature ! indescribable *naïveté* and truth." Goethe conducted

<sup>1</sup> Goethe to Lavater, 20th May 1774. *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 19.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 18.—TR.



Lavater to Fräulein Klettenberg. Her clear understanding, her fineness of feeling, her deep piety and Christianity were strong to attach Lavater to her. The difference between the conceptions of Christ formed by these two believers was to the young poet the more striking because each of them talked the subject over with him in private. Lavater called Fräulein Klettenberg the "Sabbath of his journey;" compared to her he was himself but "a chatterer, a hypocrite, an abomination." He had much to tell of Goethe's sister, and of Lenz, both of whom he had lately seen.

In so many quarters was this man of God's presence in request—by crowds he was almost revered as a saint—that Goethe was unable to secure the full intercourse he desired. And so he was impelled to accompany his inestimable new friend journeying—after a stay of five days in Frankfurt—to Ems in a special carriage. Such an intimacy-fostering mode of travel Lavater loved. During the two days' drive with Lavater and Schmoll Goethe could freely utter all his heart. Lavater himself tells us:—"On the weightiest matters of Christianity and literature they talked and laid hold on one another (*saisirten einander*). Goethe read and recited a great deal from his own poems; the thing recited and the recitation—Drama, Epopöe, and Doggerel all bore but *one* stamp, breathed but *one* spirit." They thoroughly discussed the contemplated work on physiognomy, in which Goethe was to take active interest. When the young poet was at times carried away by his careless reckless humour Lavater could bring him to order without difficulty with a kindly "*Bissh guet!*" After their seven days' companionship (June 23-29, 1774) Goethe pronounced thus:—"When in his element he is unwearied, active, efficient, decided; and a soul filled with the most glorious love and innocence. I have never held him a visionary, and he has yet less imaginative power than I sup-

posed. But because his feelings imprint on his soul the truest relations of things in nature—relations so generally unrecognised—and accordingly he flings away every terminology, speaks and acts out of a full heart, and seems to transport his hearers to a strange world while but leading them to unfamiliar corners of their hearts, he cannot escape being called a visionary.”<sup>1</sup>

Next day, returning to Frankfurt, Goethe brought *Erwin und Elmire* almost to a conclusion as he sat in the carriage. Soon after his return another guest of note came to Frankfurt—Basedow, now fifty years of age, a disciple of Rousseau as to educational reform. He had already given to the world a completely new *Orbis Pictus*, his *Elementarwerk*<sup>2</sup> in four volumes, and was very shortly to open the *Philanthropinum* at Dessau, of which he made such pompous announcement. Basedow's *Vermächtniss für die Gewissen oder Lehrbuch der Religion*, which demands a cultus based on natural religion, was dedicated to Lavater, who held the author to be an “honest weak hero.” It was said then that Lavater had invited him to a conference at Goethe's house, at which Herder too should be present. He was collecting for his *Philanthropinum* and for his *Elementarwerk*, and had just come from Weimar. Of course the famous reformer visited the famous author of *Götz* and friend of Lavater. Intercourse with Basedow was made uneasy by his whimsical pedantry, his regardless headlong ways, his *hard* tone of mind, his rudeness; yet a certain good humour never left him, of which Goethe knew how to take advantage to punish him for his naughty behaviour. On the 12th of July Basedow arrived in

<sup>1</sup> Goethe to Schönborn, July 4, 1774. *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 25.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> *Elementarwerk, ein Vorrath der besten Kenntnisse zum Lernen, Lehren, Wiederholen und Nachdenken* = *Book of Rudiments, a Treasury of the best knowledge for Learning, Teaching, Repeating and Digesting*.—TR.

Ems; Lavater had been prepared for this by Goethe. To neither Basedow nor Lavater did Goethe confide his own intention of coming for some time to Ems. On the 15th of July he procured that the case in which he was engaged should be adjourned over four weeks, because he would visit the baths. His purpose included not only the benefit of the baths and free companion-life with the two reformers, but a sudden and unexpected appearance before Jacobi at Düsseldorf. For his heart now began to tell him that he should really find in Jacobi the bosom friend so long promised by Betti and by Tante Fahlmer. With boundless delight was he received by Basedow and Lavater on the evening of the 15th. The cheery unconstrained living of the three in Ems, every one trying to convert the others, has been vividly recorded by Goethe.<sup>1</sup> The beautiful mornings and evenings were passed in fresh enjoyment; there was immoderate dancing, and all sorts of jests such as life at the baths favours were practised. Lavater, who had already paid a visit of a few days to Frau von Stein in Nassau, mother of the great statesman of Prussia's time of need, went once to see her accompanied by his two friends. They found a large company; one of those present, to Goethe's pleasure, was Mama Sophie, who had been a guest there for a considerable time. How Basedow's rude babble about the Trinity displaced the mirth, how Goethe on their drive back inflicted merry punishment is known to the reader of *Dichtung und Wahrheit*. Though the young poet probably did not meet in Nassau the eldest daughter, Johanna Luise, now married to Count Werther of Neuenheiligen in Thüringen, and just returning from her wedding-trip in France and Spain, he did meet in Ems a fellow-townsmen, the painter Kraus, who had for a considerable time taught the young Countess drawing and painting, and who had just been invited by her to

<sup>1</sup> *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, xiv. Buch.—Tr.

visit Thüringen. Kraus' pictures of scenes on the Lahn gave Goethe much pleasure. On the 17th of July (1774) the little drama *Des Künstlers Erdewallen* was written at Ems; it shows the artist of genius compelled by need of subsistence to wretched work for hire.<sup>1</sup> Next day Lavater, Basedow, Schmoll and Goethe went with a large party down the Lahn to Lahneck, and thence to Coblenz. Memorials of this wonderfully delightful trip are Lavater's diary, Goethe's noble ballad *Geistesgruss*,<sup>2</sup> which strikes a quite original note, and the humorous verses about the dinner at the Coblenz inn *Zu den drei Reichskronen*,<sup>3</sup> where the poet enjoyed his meal. In the afternoon he went over alone to Vallendar, where he visited the D'Esters; the daughter of the house gave him a bouquet, which he put in his gray hat. The party reassembled at Bendorf. On the boat Goethe, while the sun was setting gloriously, composed the drama *Des Künstlers Vergötterung*; which was completely re-shaped at a later period.<sup>4</sup> So urged was he by the creative instinct even on a pleasure-trip with friends! In Neuwied they found glad reception at the house of a pious follower of Lavater's; but in the evening they had to go to the Court. There of course the man of faith Lavater played the chief part; but the author of *Götz*, the irresistible friend of the Laroche, was warmly received too by the counts and countesses, and by the Princess of Isenburg—a princess of Anhalt by birth—then stopping in Neuwied. The 19th was spent in Neuwied, where neither the Court nor the Mennonites much pleased the poet, who felt a world in his breast, and was long-

<sup>1</sup> *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 198.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> "Hoch auf dem alten Thurne steht." *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 151. (*Thurn* is the archaic form of *Thurm*.)—TR.

<sup>3</sup> "Zwischen Lavater und Basedow." *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 152.—TR.

<sup>4</sup> See Loeper: *Goethe-Laroche*, p. 55-7, for its first form as written "On the water the 18th of July. Approaching Neuwied."—TR.

ing to see Jacobi. He met here the officer, Isenburg von Buri, of *Philandria* memory. The sometime Archon was not now of much account compared with our poet. Isenburg was also a votary of the Muse; and now through Goethe's aid sought to find a publisher. He heard some of Goethe's newest poems, and received manuscript copies of several. At six o'clock on the rainy 20th Goethe Lavater and Schmoll set off for Bonn in the small river vessel belonging to the community of Mennonites. The bad weather little affected the youthful gladness of the poet; he delighted his friends by reading to them newly-composed verse several times, among other things *Erwin und Elmire*, at which he probably continued to work; but at last wearying in the persistent rain he fell asleep under the deck-covering of the boat. From Bonn to Köln (*Cologne*), still amid rain, our exhausted travellers were conveyed by post-car. From Köln on the same day they went on, Lavater to Mülheim—being invited to preach there, and Goethe with yearning heart to Düsseldorf.

When, about eight o'clock on the morning of the 21st of July 1774, he presented himself at the door of the Jacobis' house he was met by the discouraging news that Betti was far away, while the rest of the family were at Pempelfort close by; thither he immediately hastened, but—the brothers Jacobi had just gone on business to Elberfeld! Then crept over him the superstitious thought that Destiny intended to hold him apart from Jacobi, and all the apparent reasons which had so long made him averse to the brothers again seemed good. But in the Art Gallery the hardness of his heart was “softened, strengthened, and therefore steeled.” At about twelve o'clock he wrote an account of what had happened to Betti,<sup>1</sup> whose mediating presence he would so much have desired. “What

<sup>1</sup> Goethe to Helene Elizabeth Jacobi, July 21, 1774. *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 29.—TR.



next? It rests with the gods," so he ends; he did not tell her how he intended to surprise her husband in Elberfeld, where Jung Stilling now practised. In what odd companionship he presented himself before Jacobi, how at first sight they felt united for ever, has been told by Goethe himself with sufficient correctness as to essential things. He writes to Betti in full glee a few days later:—"No introducing, marshalling, excusing; straight dropt from heaven in front of Fritz Jacobi! And he and I, and I and he! And were already, without preliminary of a sister's glance, what we should be and could be."<sup>1</sup> In the hospitable Pempelfort home, the happiness of the new alliance was realised through the most intimate heart interchange with the two brothers; with Heinse, poet of a Utopia where life should be simplified to glowing sensuous enjoyment, disciple of Wieland and Rousseau; and with Werthes, the Wieland-inspired poet of gentle emotion. The *Laidion* of Heinse Goethe had admired as a masterpiece of its kind.<sup>2</sup> Heinse was three years, Werthes one year older than Goethe. Fritz Jacobi was six years his senior, slender, handsome, fine-featured, with splendid blue eyes and dignified bearing. And this man, whom Goethe had so long contemned as untrue to his own spirit and as an insipid worldling, now opened freely his noble heart, full of a like energy, warm with an unusual throbbing in presence of the young Apollo. Each found in the other what he had hitherto looked for in vain,—the same ardent impulsion to the most complete development of Nature effervescent within.

Spinoza formed a peculiar bond of union. In the arbour at the hunting-seat Castle Bensberg Jacobi spoke to his new

<sup>1</sup> Goethe to Helene Elizabeth Jacobi [probably close of July 1774]. *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 29-30.—Tr.

<sup>2</sup> Goethe to Schönborn, 4th July 1774. *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 25.—Tr.

friend never-to-be-forgotten words concerning the great lonely thinker, penetrating to the heart of his philosophy; above all, expressing his conviction that the Spinoza condemned by men as a denier of God has made it clear that Nature is Divine, is God. Jacobi's conviction that Faith must make good the inadequacy of human reason hardly came to be spoken of at this time, and would have the less power to disunite because of Goethe's high reverence before all genuine religious belief. After the mild, mystical Lavater and the rude hard rationalist Basedow, the clear philosophic conspectus of one who had so pressed to the centre of Spinoza's teaching could not but work on Goethe with highly stimulating effect, and he would feel the more deeply the significance of such a friend.

But first in ancient Köln the union was to receive its highest consecration. On the morning of the 24th of July a carriage bore the two Jacobis and Heinse to the cathedral city, where they alighted in the inn *Zum heiligen Geist*, which looked out at the back on the Rhine hard by. To the little band who passed through its streets in the intoxication of friendship the gloomy city appeared very bright. The unfinished cathedral seemed to proclaim with mighty voice the measure of achievement to which the daring human spirit may attain. An even more affecting spectacle was a family picture by Lebrun in the house of Jabach, now occupied by a single servant alone. Everard Jabach, the rich merchant, the patron of art, the patrician, had long passed away and the blooming family which had surrounded him, and the echoing house was left untenanted; yet there he stood, with wife and children, and gazed from the living picture. The spirit of Jabach seemed to speak to the poet's soul, exhorting him to gather together his forces and put them to their fullest use; he could not help giving his intense agitation words, even in the silent presence which had so stirred him, a presence which followed

him for many days. In the inn that evening, as they watched the daylight fade and the moon rise behind the Siebengebirge, while Goethe sitting at the table repeated some of his own poems with all the deep emotion of his soul, they felt strangely drawn together : their spirits grew one. At midnight, after they had all separated for sleep, Goethe once again sought Jacobi in his room ; they fell on each other's neck, and Jacobi "wept sacred tears on his breast."<sup>1</sup> And in high spiritual elevation, they promised each to stretch his utmost strength to the most effectual working, that those best things of which God and Nature had made them capable might be accomplished.

On the 25th of July Goethe rejoined Lavater at Ems. With Basedow they on the following day went to see Mama Sophie, and the opponent of the Trinity, as was his wont, honoured the good wine too much. On the 27th Lavater left. This endlessly good and energetic man was another friend whom Goethe now believed inseparably grappled. Goethe had promised to go over the *Physiognomische Fragmente* in manuscript, to change, to omit, to add, as seemed good to him. On Lavater's return journey he again stopped at the Goethes' house ; how cordial were his relations with Goethe's parents is proved by their letters to the "dearest best son," the "dearest friend," the "noble guest, whom it was so easy to please."

Goethe remained a fortnight longer in Ems with Basedow ; he must in that time have had plenty of the lively contention he desired ! On the 30th the poet was shaken by an occurrence which he remembered many years later when writing the *Wanderjahre* (Book II. Chapter xii., *Wilhelm an Natalien*).

<sup>1</sup> Goethe to Jacobi, April 1775. The evening singing and the midnight meeting are recalled to Goethe's mind by Jacobi long after, in a letter dated December 28, 1812. One of the songs sung by Goethe was :—"Es war ein Buhle frech genug," which see in *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 581-4.—TR.

Four boys catching cray-fish in the Lahn were drowned. When Goethe wrote next day inviting himself and Basedow to dine with Mama Sophie on August 2—"My senses have not yet come back : there were four boys drowned last night ; not one saved. Only in such moments does man feel how powerless he is, and he with hot arms<sup>1</sup> and travail and tears effects nought." Probably, like his Wilhelm Meister, he had laboured to restore life ; the "hot arms" points to the chafing, which is one of the means of restoration. His stay at Ems was varied by repeated visits to the Ehrenbreitstein lady, from whom he begged wine, being "poisoned" with the liquids dispensed at Ems.<sup>2</sup> And his father's economy compelled him to borrow money from her.<sup>3</sup> Before leaving for home the first copies of *Clavigo* came ; he gave one to the Laroche, others he sent to Jacobi. On the evening of August 12 he left on the post-car.

His new ardent friendship and the manifold impressions of travel had infused fresh life into him. Jacobi and he wrote mutual encouragement to be up and doing, and took pleasure in each other's productions. Jacobi having urged him to visit Johanna Fahlmer again, the old intimacy with her was now resumed. Anna Sybilla Münch probably was one of those to whom he gave a copy of *Clavigo*, her command having been at least the external occasion of the poem. But his four

<sup>1</sup> "Nur in solchen Augenblicken fühlt der Mensch wie wenig er ist, und er mit *heissen Armen* und Schweiss und Thränen nichts wirkt." Loeper, p. 59, conjectures for "*heissen Armen*"—*heissem Athmen*"—"hot breath." He thinks his reading supported by the following passage from the *Wanderjahre*, ii. 12:—"Ich hatte etwas von Reiben gehört, das in solchem Falle hülfreich sein sollte ; ich rieb meine Thränen ein und belog mich mit der Wärme die ich erregte. In der Verwirrung dachte ich ihm *Athem einzublasen*."—TR.

<sup>2</sup> Goethe to Frau von Laroche (Ems, the 31st of July 1774). Loeper, p. 58.—TR.

<sup>3</sup> See Loeper, pp. 63, 69.—TR.

weeks' absence (July 15–August 13, 1774) had chilled their alliance, and even the more would it dwindle, mere graceful fooling that it was at its best, beside his glowing friendship for Jacobi, and the sudden and mighty start of his genius. On the 27th of August he spent a happy day with Merck in Langen. (Merck has been—in vain—offering Goethe's *Puppenspiel* to Nicolai.) The old friend had contented himself in his position as he best could, though he had not given up thought of seeking elsewhere—in Berlin if possible—a suitable appointment.

The unrest and unhappiness of Max Brentano continued to fill Goethe with sorrow,<sup>1</sup> especially because she understood not why he held back from her society. In the extraordinary creative energy of this time the voices of dissent roused by his *Clavigo* had no power to disquiet. To Jacobi, with whose *Epistel an die Akademisten* the first-fruits of their union he had been much delighted, he wrote thus :—"See, beloved, that which, after all, is the beginning and end of all writing, the reproduction of the world about me through the inner world which seizes, binds together, new-makes, kneads, and sets forth again in a form and fashion original—that, thank God, remains ever a secret, which I indeed will not reveal to the crowd of starers and chatterers."<sup>2</sup>

To this month and the next (August and September 1774) fall the plan and first "Shreds" of the wild stormy *Ewiger Jude*, the beginning of the great *Faust* so long a dream, perhaps too *Satyros oder der vergötterte Waldteufel*, a piece

<sup>1</sup> See for instance : Goethe to Frau von Laroche, Frankfurt, the 15th of September, 1774 :—"I saw the Max yesterday at the comedy, she is not pleased with me. Dear God, I am not pleased with myself ! She has headache ! I beg you to counsel her, and in your letter advise *Exercise !* the poor little thing stays indoors too much." *Loeper*, p. 74.  
—TR.

<sup>2</sup> Goethe to Fritz Jacobi [21st August 1774]. *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 31-4.—TR.



of the broadest humour, a counterpart to *Pater Brey*. His roused creative energy let him rest not day nor night.

The September Fair brought its tribute of important men to Frankfurt. Through Mama Sophie's good offices Goethe made the acquaintance of Groschlag, late Minister of the Elector of Mainz, but fallen, the Elector having suddenly died, and now retired to live on his estate Dieburg. Here is the plainest proof that in Goethe's acquaintanceship with people of rank he was not at all bent on external advantage. Close intimacy with men of ability, of whatever rank, he esteemed the highest gain of life.

In the extremest agitation he about the 20th September sent the first copy of *Werther* to Lotte. In a few lines directed to her he begged that she would read the novel alone, and Kestner likewise; and then let each send him a little word about it. This little note he accidentally omitted to send with the book as intended. When on the 23d he did send it he wrote to Kestner:—"The fair bustles and brawls; my friends are here, and past and future strangely mingle. What will become of me? O you fixed (*gemachten*) people how much better off you are!"<sup>1</sup> He was strangely moved by the thought that his friend now enjoyed a contented bliss yet denied to himself.

Kestner did not conceal the pain which he felt thus to be made with his wife the subject of scandal, for everything invented by Goethe or borrowed from the unhappy story of Jerusalem would be taken by the world to be literally true of Lotte and her lovers. By Kestner's unfortunately not ungrounded reproach Goethe was the more distressed because of the infinite gratitude he felt himself to owe to both his friends. Yet he believed that the issue would show their anxiety more than was warranted; indeed he felt that fate

<sup>1</sup> *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 39.—Tr.

could only have permitted him to write the book that it might bind their union closer.<sup>1</sup>

The second of the three special copies first received found its way, on the 22d of September, to Thalehrenbreitstein. Mama Sophie was, when she had read it, to send it to Jacobi and to let the author know what she thought of the second part, as she had already criticised the first in manuscript.<sup>2</sup> There is a rumour that she was angry with him for inweaving her daughter Max in the book; but such an inweaving is totally out of question. Knowing Jacobi's fine moral feeling, Goethe was extremely anxious about his judgment. Not to disturb him in forming it, Goethe would for a time neither write to him nor send him anything.<sup>3</sup> He had indeed to wait long in uncertainty, for Jacobi did not get the book until the middle of October, and not until the 21st, having read it thrice, did he write to describe its powerful effect. To the poet's deep-felt joy, he spoke thus—"Thy heart, thy heart, is everything to me. Thy heart it is by which thou art enlightened, strengthened, established. I know that this is so, for I too hear the voice, the voice of the only begotten Son of God, the Mediator between the Father and us. My soul is too full."

Goethe had meanwhile had a visit from Klopstock, whom the Markgraf of Baden had summoned to Karlsruhe, desiring to possess in his own territory the poet of religion and the Fatherland. Klopstock had asked Goethe to meet him at Friedberg on a day appointed and bring him on to Frankfurt;

<sup>1</sup> Goethe to Kestner and Lotte [October 1774]. *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 40-1.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> Goethe to Frau von Laroche, Monday, the 19th of September, 1774. *Loeper*, pp. 77-78.—TR.

<sup>3</sup> Goethe to Johanna Fahlmer [end of September 1774]. *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 40.—TR.

but, having delayed in his journey one day, he was not in Friedberg when Goethe came there, and carriage and Goethe had to return without the most famed man on the German Parnassus. He did arrive in Frankfurt on the day following, and was met with the warmest welcome by the Goethes (Early October 1774). Klopstock was now fifty, of refined manners, serious, formal, ceremoniously dignified, speaking a quite distinguished German; on the enthusiastic poet so gladly subordinate he made a friendly impression, seeming however more a prudent man of the world than an inspired bard. Klopstock had just been with the Göttingen poets, and tried to bind them yet closer to himself. In Göttingen he had spoken "amazingly" (*erstaunlich*) for Goethe, had praised *Clavigo*; *Werther* was not yet issued to the trade. Klopstock could not fail to see how far Goethe exceeded all those poets in fire and genius; and so with Goethe he condescended somewhat from his peculiar prophetic elevation. He is "a noble great man, on whom the peace of God rests," according to a letter of Goethe a month later.<sup>1</sup> The scenes of *Faust*, read aloud by the poet with all the fire of his soul, were what most impressed Klopstock. He expressed himself in detail on skating, on the best kind of skates—"Schrittschuh" not "*Schlittschuh*" must the winged cothurnus be in future named. Ecclesiastical Councillor (*Kirchenrath*) Böckmann, through whose agency the Markgraf had invited Klopstock, now came from Karlsruhe to fetch the honoured guest. With Böckmann also Goethe found himself easily on the friendliest terms; lending him *Satyros*, and begging his kind offices in getting proper skates made. Goethe did not allow himself to be deprived by Böckmann's presence of the pleasure of accompanying his distinguished visitor part of the way, perhaps to

<sup>1</sup> Goethe to Frau von La Roche [November 20, 1774]. (*See the end of the letter*): *Loefer*, p. 84-6.—TR.

Mannheim. Returning in the post-carriage to Frankfurt on the 10th of October his excess of life overflowed in the poem *An Schwager Kronos*.<sup>1</sup>

On Oct. 15th he had a visit from Boie, who, returning from Holland, had been with Jacobi and Mama Sophie on his way. Boie was extremely delighted with the day that he spent undisturbedly alone with Goethe, whose heart was "as noble and great as his mind." "I have made him read to me a great deal, completed work and fragment," writes Boie, "and in all is the note of originality, independent power, and—not denying what there is of bizarre and incorrect—everything is marked with the stamp of genius." (So the Gretchen scenes too must have been for the most part already written.) When a couple of days after Boie returned at about two in the afternoon from Darmstadt Goethe met him with open arms at the inn. "We stayed together until midnight, and must at length lock the door, only in order to be quite alone. He read something to me; we soon however let reading alone, and the talk fell on the most important matters of thought and feeling, a region in which our views were often the same."

Goethe's soul was that autumn in the most active fermentation; his mood extraordinarily varying. The future hung often a gloomy cloud of presage above his spirit, while no determined plans of life were yet formed. Least of all did he think of marriage; not one of the many Frankfurt girls his acquaintances, highly as he esteemed them after their merits, had deeply moved his heart. He suffered for others; there was his sister—Schlosser having to go as *Amtmann* to Emmendingen the settling down in Karlsruhe for which she had hoped so long delayed. And young Max Brentano's unhappiness grieved him continually. "I am stormy, confused, and just cling to a few ideas," he wrote about this time to Max's mother. "I have

<sup>1</sup> *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 159.

been speaking to dear Max at the play. I have again seen the eyes; I know not what is in the eyes.”<sup>1</sup> When his motherly friend told him her sorrow about the suffering of her son, then lying almost beyond hope, he replied:—“I lay since in silence and pondered and groped through all my soul if peradventure there were strength within me to bear those things to come purposed for me and mine (*den Meinigen*) by iron fate; if anywhere I might find a rock whereon to build a tower of refuge for me and my possessions (*Habe*) in the last extremity.”<sup>2</sup> And to Tante Fahlmer he writes in October that he cannot come because he is intolerable and intolerant (*unerträglich und unverträglich*); else has he all that is good; is however again brooding dragon-like.<sup>3</sup>

Beside literary work and sketching, especially portrait sketching, he in November (1774) enjoyed with the delight of youth the pleasure of skating, to which Klopstock had done such honour in verse. Beside a couple of letters of the time which describe it<sup>4</sup> we have a memorial of this skating in the overflowing merry lines written in an old album, dating from 1680, at Crespel's house in the evenings of the 13th and 14th.<sup>5</sup> On the 15th he informs Tante Fahlmer that he is still entangled (*verfangen*) in all kinds of drawing, and has besides a quantity of stuff on hand of no significance; he sends a portfolio full of various sketches, that he may in some sort be with her.<sup>6</sup> Four days later he met the Brentanos at the

<sup>1</sup> Goethe to the La Roche [beginning of October 1774]. *Loeper*, p. 79.—Tr.

<sup>2</sup> Goethe to the La Roche, 21st October 1774. *Loeper*, pp. 81-2.—Tr.

<sup>3</sup> Goethe to Johanna Fahlmer [middle of October 1774]. *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 41-2.—Tr.

<sup>4</sup> See *Der junge Goethe*, pp. 42-3.—Tr.

<sup>5</sup> *Stammbuch Johann Peter Reyniers von Frankfurt am Main*, 1680. *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 174-5.—Tr.

<sup>6</sup> *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 43.—Tr.



theatre; the husband was extraordinarily friendly.<sup>1</sup> Even did he for a moment feel it possible to visit their house once more, there was the instant fear of the threatening danger of a revival of his passion. As to his own destination he was just then more than ever in doubt, for it often seemed to him that, with his impulse to sensuous presentation, he ought to devote himself not to poetry but to painting. At the house of the already-mentioned painter Nothnagel he made his first attempts at painting, announced solemnly to Mama Sophie on the 20th of November as follows:—"I shall this evening take in my hand the oil-painter's brush! with what humility, devotion, and hope, I cannot express. My life's destiny hangs on that moment. It is a gloomy day! We shall meet each other yet in sunshine." We find him the day after in the studio joyfully agitated by the arrival of a letter from Kestner, an affectionate bearer of full pardon for *Werther*. "*Werther* had to, had to exist!" he writes to Kestner with the most vivid feeling of the artistic perfection and the clear truthfulness of sentiment of the book. "You feel not *him*, you feel but *me* and *you*, and what you call *stuck on*, but which—in spite of you—and others—is *woven in*. If I am still alive you are he whom I must thank for it—therefore you are not Albert." "Within a year," he promises "whatever may remain of suspicion, misinterpretation, etc., among the chattering crowd," he will, "after the *loveliest, simplest, truest* fashion, wipe away as fog and smoke before a clear north wind." He alone can *invent* what may deliver the two dear ones from windy suspicion; he has it in his power, only it is yet too soon.<sup>2</sup>

Thus was the noble creation through which he had rid him-

<sup>1</sup> Goethe to the La Roche [20th November 1774]. *Loeper*, p. 84-6.—Tr.

<sup>2</sup> Goethe to Kestner, November 21, 1774. *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 45-6.—Tr.

self of his world weariness most lovingly forgiven by the dear ones whom it had made the common talk. But a crew of Philistine critics of *Werther* arose—moralising, hairsplitting men—and plagued the author's life with wearisome nice expositions or shameful abuse, powerless though they were to disable the working of the wonderful nature-breathing book.<sup>1</sup> And alas! he whom Goethe esteemed above all others—Lessing—was rendered hostile to *Werther* as to *Götz* by the swarm of foolish imitators; and, in the case of *Werther*, still more by seeing the story of young Jerusalem, once his valued friend, used as poetic capital. On the other hand Lavater held *Werther* to be not at all dangerous—to be *the* work of our Literature. Among Goethe's countless admirers was the famous physician Zimmermann of Hannover; he wrote a letter expressing his veneration for the novel in which everything was so true. The philosopher Garve too thought *Werther* the best thing Goethe had done yet, and foretold, in Engel's *Philosoph für die Welt*, that Goethe would obtain great influence over his contemporaries, having heart, understanding and audacity, favour with the public and desire to rule. Many others, Sulzer being one, understood so little the intent of the poet that they called him to account for what is said and done by the *Werther* who left to his emotions the guidance of his will.

In Frankfurt the old friends pressed more zealously continually around the now celebrated poet, whose name, as author of *Werther*, the publisher had, contrary to agreement, betrayed in a catalogue for the fair; new friends were added. As a poet Klinger stood next, in whom, however, desire was not matched by power. The story runs that Goethe gave him

<sup>1</sup> Yet it is true that many foolish heads gave themselves to the imitation of *Werther*, and of the author whom they supposed to resemble *Werther*.—DÜNTZER.

the *Puppenspiel*<sup>1</sup> to do what he liked with, and that he printed it. It appeared in the earlier half of October (1774) almost at the same time with the sentimental *Werther*, its bubbling, wanton spirits strangely contrasting; here were the two extremes of Goethe's nature. Heinrich Leopold Wagner, a native of Strassburg, about two years' Goethe's senior, who had been a tutor in the house of President von Günderobe in Saarbrücken, had come to Frankfurt during the fair; fain to distinguish himself as a poet, he clung to the author of *Götz* and *Werther*, now overtopping all the rest. Long, lean, good-tempered, a trifle shy, he was a merry, social companion; and Goethe honoured in him, as in Klinger, the steadfast battling with his low estate, though Klinger's was of course the far more powerful and lofty nature. Wagner was going to the Law, but had not finished his studies. As a poet he had skill in versification rather than fresh feeling, more ingenuity than natural humour. His *Confiscable Erzählungen*, just published, was a play of deliberate frivolity. Merck, whose bitterness grew constantly more pronounced, was angry to see the throng of "knaves" (*Buben*) who clung round his friend and flattered him, that they might sun themselves in his fame.

When, on the 1st of December 1774, Goethe received Volume I. of J. G. Jacobi's *Iris*, he felt impelled, by the request for contributions addressed to the "friends of the fair sex," to write out from memory and send to Jacobi some of his own earlier songs to do what he pleased with. Instead of Goethe's name, though, he would have certain letters subscribed, that ladies and gentlemen might have food for speculation.<sup>2</sup> He now gave himself passionately to sketching and painting. He himself prepared a portfolio of drawings for

<sup>1</sup> "The *Puppenspiel*," i.e., *Des Künstlers Erdewallen, Jahrmarktsfest zu Plundersweilern*, and *Pater Brey*.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> Goethe to J. G. Jacobi, Dec. 1, 1774. *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 48.—TR.

Merck, prefixing two poems, with the purport that living feeling is the basis of all Art ;<sup>1</sup> an idea uttered in several lyrics of this time with enthusiastic ardour.<sup>2</sup> He painted a pretty stove-screen for Hieronymus Schlosser, with the head of Schlosser's favourite poet Virgil, and many ornaments all having reference to Virgil. He was successful in other little efforts, but when he tried to paint great things he felt his want of power.

And now an acquaintance was formed more full of consequence for him than any that went before. On the evening of December 11, 1774, a tall thin man entered, whom he in the twilight took for Fritz Jacobi, then expected to arrive at any time. It was Captain Karl Ludwig von Knebel, just turned thirty, tutor since July to Prince Constantin of Weimar. The two young princes of Weimar were travelling to Paris, taking Karlsruhe on the way. Karl August, the elder, now seventeen, was accompanied by his tutor, the grave and formal Count von Görtz-Schlitz, and by *Stallmeister* von Stein-Kochberg. Knebel was well fitted to win Goethe's affection and confidence ; noble, ardent, gifted with poetic power ; in Berlin the friend of Ramler and his circle ; in Göttingen the friend of Boie ; he, too, in his turn, was quite carried away by the loveableness of the author of *Werther*. Goethe was conducted by Knebel, after a while, to the young princes, who received him in a very friendly manner, even inviting him to visit them in Mainz, the goal of their journey on the morrow. It was a happy chance when the conversation fell on the just published first volume of Justus Möser's *Patriotische Phantasieen*, so that the young poet could show his sympathetic insight into the question of the elevation of the people. An echo of this conversation may be found in

<sup>1</sup> *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 156.—Tr.

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 173.—Tr.

the letter of thanks which he addressed a fortnight later to Möser's daughter as the editor of these essays. "I carry them about with me," he writes; "whenever or wherever I may open them all grows well with me, and a hundred various desires, hopes, projects unfold within my soul."<sup>1</sup> The noble young Hereditary Prince made a deep impression on Goethe. Knebel stayed over the 12th in Frankfurt "in order," he wrote to his sister, "to enjoy the best of all men."<sup>2</sup> On the 13th the two proceeded together to Mainz, where they found the princes at the inn *Zu den drei Kronen*. The Hereditary Prince especially was captivated by the mighty personality of the young poet. As the so well deserved farce on Wieland was mentioned, Goethe represented it as a mere overflow of careless fun, and declared himself ready to make the first advances in a reconciliation; this he accordingly did in a postscript added to a letter which Knebel addressed to Wieland from Mainz. He gave copies of many of his poems to Knebel, who would, as occasion offered, read them to the young princes; one of them probably was *Erwin und Elmire*.

And now when he returned to Frankfurt quite full of the confiding goodness of the young princes, of the Hereditary Prince's excellence especially, the sad news met him that Fräulein von Klettenberg, who had taken ill a short time since, had died on the day of his departure, and was already buried. "Died, buried in my absence, who was so dear, so much to me," he wrote to Frau von Laroche. "Mama that disciplines (*picht*) chaps and teaches them to hold their

<sup>1</sup> Goethe to Frau von Voigt *née* Möser in Osnabrück, 28th December 1774. *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 56-7.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> This letter, with Goethe's continuation of it, is reprinted. *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 50-1. Goethe's and Knebel's long correspondence of nearly sixty years was reprinted by Brockhaus, edited by G. E. Guhrauer. *Leipzig*, 1851.—TR.



heads erect. For me, I will stay a little longer.”<sup>1</sup> He felt the blow the more keenly, because he had been hoping to find in her heavenly clear look a kind of illumination thrown upon his presentiment of important consequence from the visit of the young princes. Though the upright Knebel had made an extremely favourable impression on Councillor Goethe, the old Frankfurt republican would fain know nought of sovereignties; and it was even contrary to his liking that his son should so soon have followed the princes to Mainz. Goethe made use of his acquaintance with Knebel to discover how President Hahn in Karlsruhe was disposed towards Schlosser; how he (Goethe) stood with Count Görtz. Knebel is to keep the Hereditary Prince mindful of him.<sup>2</sup> A great delight to him was the cordial reply now received from Wieland; strange though it seemed to be reconciled with those hitherto passionately hateful to him—with the Jacobis and Wieland. For, as he told Knebel,<sup>3</sup> after sending the greeting to Wieland, he needed an ideal not less for scorn of the Worthless than for admiration of the Noble.

Not only was drawing diligently pushed on, but many a song sprang to the lips, and plans of dramas half-formed within. With the spring he hoped, he wrote to Boie, to begin a new production which, too, should have its own original tone.<sup>4</sup> Some work quite different from what he had done hitherto and of greater importance must have hovered before him; probably it was *Egmont*. When, as was his use, he was

<sup>1</sup> Goethe to Frau von La Roche, 22d December 1774. *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 52-4. *Loeper*, pp. 90-92.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> Goethe to Knebel, 28th December 1774. *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 55-6.—TR.

<sup>3</sup> One evening in Mainz.—TR.

<sup>4</sup> Goethe to Boie, December 23, 1774. *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 54-5.—TR.

arranging and packing all the letters received during the year (1774), many various thoughts passed through his head, and the reflection was borne in upon him :—"When one has rolled the ethical snowball of his Ego a year forward, he has gathered a good deal on the way."<sup>1</sup> With many a pain and grief the departing year had brought him much love, much to further him, and at its very close the unspoken foreboding of a union with a noble, intellectual, practical young prince.

<sup>1</sup> Goethe to Frau von La Roche, January 3, 1775. (Not in *Der junge Goethe*.) *Loefer*, p. 95-6.—TR.

## CHAPTER VI.

LILI—SWITZERLAND.

JANUARY—NOVEMBER 1775.

ON New Year's Day, 1775, the poet of *Werther*, lace-coated, paid his visit to the Senior Bürgermeister. Whatever hopes of a foreign connection he found in the late begun acquaintance with the Hereditary Prince of Weimar—to be Prince Regnant next September—who could have prophesied this to be the last of such visits for the young Frankfurter? Still less could one have guessed what threads of varied colour this year would weave into his life; how it would draw him hither and thither, distract his soul more than ever with the almightiness of love—even giving him to taste the sweetness of betrothal; lastly, after many a painful inward fight, lift and bear him from the city of his birth to a new home.

When at a later time<sup>1</sup> he writes to Bürger that by the fairy *Hold*—or *Unhold*—had come a New Year's gift—three-quarters of a year most distracted, most entangled, most complete, most full, most empty, most forceful, most trifling, he seems to mark New Year's Day as the beginning of the love which dominated his life during this period. So probably the evening of this New Year's Day was the evening on which he was asked by a friend to come to the splendid house *Zum*

<sup>1</sup> October 18, 1775. *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 118-9.—TR.

*Libeneck*, at the angle of the Cornmarket, next to the spot where at a later period the German Reformed Church stood.

Susanna Elizabeth D'Orville, daughter of Johann Noe D'Orville of the Reformed Church, had, in the year of Goethe's birth, married a co-religionist of her father, the merchant and banker Johann Wolfgang Schöнемann. Her husband died in 1763; seven years after his death—in 1770—she rebuilt the house after the new taste. The only daughter, Anna Elizabeth, was born on the 23d of June 1758; two sons, Georg and Friedrich, were some years older than their sister. Every evening a select company assembled in this house, and once introduced you were always welcome. Of course a desire was felt to see the celebrated poet here even once; he was in general supposed to be a strange fellow, whose manners were quite at variance with the tone of good society. He himself on one occasion, writing to Mama Sophie, subscribes "*La grosse bête*,"<sup>1</sup> and probably by that time had got fond of calling himself "the bear;" which, it will be remembered, was Madame d'Epinay's nickname for Rousseau. He had long resisted the invitation of his friend, but at length gave in, and went on this New Year's Day evening to a concert at Frau Schöнемann's. At the moment of Goethe's entrance a sonata was to be played by the daughter of the house, a fresh blonde of sixteen, with great dark blue eyes, expressing the pure goodness of the soul within, with gentle, delicate features, and a mouth round which played constantly a winning smile. It was some time before the young poet, who stood at the lower end of the piano, could say a polite word in praise of her musical talent, to which she made a pleasant reply. When he was going away both mother and daughter expressed a hope that they would soon see their

<sup>1</sup> Goethe to Frau von La Roche (end of May 1774). See *Loeper*, p. 39.—Tr.

esteemed guest again. Lili, whose powers had been carefully cultivated—she not only could draw and sing prettily, but had made essays in graceful verse—grew more and more in captivating charm to the poet as his visits were repeated ; yet at



FIG. 17. Lili. After the photograph of the best family picture, the photograph in the monograph *Lillis Bild*, by Count Ferdinand Eckbrecht von Dürkheim.

first it was only a brotherly affection, such as he had felt for many “good maidens”—not love’s disquieting.

Thus we find him pleasantly busied with sketching and verse-making during the first half of January (1775) ; he wrote short lyrics, also the poem *Prometheus*, setting forth the defiance to the gods of the self-erected moulder of men. He sent *Prometheus* to Merck on the 10th, just before going to his friend André in Offenbach, who was probably then composing for the songs of *Erwin und Elmire*. “I have,” he writes, “for three days



been working at a drawing with all my diligence, and have not yet finished it. It is good to do, once in a way, all that one can do, so attaining to the honour of learning oneself more nearly.”<sup>1</sup> His *Stella* was already planned. In writing it he had in mind the strange tale of Swift’s two lovers, Stella and Vanessa; and in the heroine he meant to show the power of glowing passion. On the 13th he writes to Knebel:—“Am I in good remembrance among you? Addio; I have had some very good productive days.”<sup>2</sup>

By this Fritz Jacobi had come to Frankfurt, where he stayed four weeks—until the 5th of February—in close communion with Goethe. They were “very dear, good, and vigorous” together.<sup>3</sup> Goethe read his *Faust* to Jacobi, who was deeply stirred by it; confided to him all plans and introduced him to his familiar social circles. Jacobi tried in vain to induce Wieland to come to Frankfurt. Nor could Jacobi’s efforts make Wieland kindly disposed to the young poet, whose satire he continued to fear. A “good” letter from Herder at this time gave Goethe vivid pleasure; cordially did he take the hand stretched out in renewal of friendship. He answered Herder on the 18th of January; on the same day he writes to Mama Sophie:—“We are now—I especially—right glad of life; there is a strong current of things.”<sup>4</sup>

He had ere this called to see Lili in the early part of the day, and had talked intelligently with her and her mother, so that the latter came to trust him and gave him free admittance to the house. So did the charming, sweet-natured maiden captivate him by an artless account of her young life, that—with deep disquietude—he felt his heart kindle again to love.

<sup>1</sup> This letter will be found *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 73.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 59.—TR.

<sup>3</sup> Goethe to Frau von La Roche, February 17, 1775. *Loeper*, pp. 98-99.—TR.

<sup>4</sup> *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 59. *Loeper*, p. 97.—TR.

With what pangs had he renounced his love for Lotte, with what violent struggle had he held aloof from young Max Brentano! And now should love anew overmaster the poet, who felt a whole world in his breast, moving in darkness to his destiny? This time it was a maiden reared in a higher social circle, highly accomplished, somewhat spoiled, only just budding into womanhood; her warm affection made him happy; he hoped to mould her after his desire, so to secure the purest happiness of life—the perfect accord of two hearts in one. Yet his old inward striving after Freedom and Culture, how would it fare? a question which held him back from yielding up his soul as yet.

Just at this time, about the 20th of January, he received overflowing letters of friendship from the two Counts Stolberg, who adored Nature and Freedom, who felt some poetic stirrings, and who were the personal friends of Klopstock. Their studies in Göttingen over, they had become Gentlemen of the Bedchamber in Copenhagen; they were about Goethe's age, Christian being a little older, Fritz Leopold more than a year younger. They also transmitted to him the letter of an "Unknown One;" it was from their sister Auguste Luise, now one-and-twenty, who lived alternately in Copenhagen with her brother-in-law the Minister Bernstorff and in Hamburg with the Countess Bernstorff. The loving tenderness of the letter moved Goethe strangely, especially the anxious question whether he were happy. He immediately wrote in reply: her letter came on him at a strange hour; but—he can say no more while so agitated. And when, eight days later, he returned to his writing, he could only excuse his fragmentary stammering style by alleging his condition; since the Reflection of the Infinite moves within: "And what is that but Love?"<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Goethe to The Dear Unknown, begun probably on the 18th of

Such exceedingly agitated moods were of course only temporary, but his love-pain increased, until at length he urged even Jacobi to go away and leave him.<sup>1</sup> Jacobi left on the 5th of February. On the 4th Goethe dined with the Hereditary Prince of Meiningen, who, with his younger brother, with *Oberhofmeister* von Dürkheim and two tutors, was on his way to Strassburg. The Hereditary Prince recounts that Goethe, who sat next him, speaks a great deal, speaks well, particularly original *naïve* talk, is extraordinarily amusing and merry; has *Façons* quite his own; his own ideas and opinions on all subjects, and on the people he knows; his own language; words of his own.

Immediately after this he had an enthusiastic letter about *Werther* from Bürger, who had only just read the novel. Yet now, here he was in the toils of a quite different love!—a torment to him, for his beloved compelled him to be present at the evening social gatherings, where the friendliness with which she had to greet so many others, and the thought how happy he would be alone with her, cut his heart. He expressed his pain in imperishable form in the poems *Neue Liebe Neues Leben*, and *An Belinden*.<sup>2</sup> Nothing marks more strikingly his condition than the last line of the former:—“Liebe! Liebe! lass mich los!” The superscription “*To Belinde*” was given to the lyric so named only after the few lines dedicating *Erwin und Elmire*<sup>3</sup> to his beloved were written, in which he found the stock name *Belinde* to rhyme

January, continued on the 26th, and again continued, date unfixed. *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 61-62.—TR.

<sup>1</sup> So Goethe mentions in a letter to Helene Jacobi, February 6, 1775. *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 62.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 176-7.—TR.

<sup>3</sup> *Erwin und Elmire* was completed to appear in the *Iris*.

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conveniently.<sup>1</sup> How, notwithstanding the fair eyes of the "dainty blonde," this society life oppressed him; hunted in lace coat from card-table to concert, from concert to ball, he confided in a letter of the 13th of February to his "Dear Unknown One" (whose name he had indeed learned in the interval); but we hear too how he often, "in gray beaver coat, with brown silk neck-cloth and strong boots, fore-feels the coming spring in the caressing February air;" and he is able to say to his distant friend that he—"always living in himself, aspiring and working, now expressing the innocent emotions of youth in little poems, the strong seasoning of life in many kinds of drama, sketching the forms of his friends and of the familiar places, and of his beloved household goods, with chalk on gray paper, after his ability, asks neither on the right hand nor the left what is thought of his performance, because he working rises always a step higher, because he would fain—not leap at an Ideal, but, struggling or trifling, let his emotions unfold themselves to capacities."<sup>2</sup>

A letter of thanks to Bürger on the 17th of February confides that he has not been industrious just of late, yet the spring breezes, which even already often come playing across the gardens to his chamber, are working again upon his heart; and he hopes that some result will disentangle itself from the fragrant confusion.<sup>3</sup>

Beside reading through Lavater's *Physiognomische Fragmente*, to which he in January appended an essay of his own, he was constantly busy with his *Stella*. Fritz Jacobi, on a

<sup>1</sup> Den kleinen Strauss den ich dir binde,  
Pflückt 'ich aus diesem Herzen hier.  
Nimm ihn gefällig auf Belinde!  
Der kleine Strauss, er ist von mir.

*Der junge Goethe*, iii. 504.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 63-65.—TR.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* iii. 67.—TR.

second stay in Frankfurt (February 24—March 2), heard with great pleasure the beginning of this *Schauspiel für Liebende*. A little earlier Jung Stilling had made his appearance; he came to operate for cataract on a Herr von Lersner. Jung, like Jacobi, stopped at the Goethes'; but a room in the neighbourhood had soon to be hired for the much-sought-after physician. The despairing lamentations which the pious man uttered over his unsuccessful operation were extremely trying to Goethe and his parents, with whom he was still a daily guest. The young poet had his own annoyances. The criticisms of *Werther*, whether the snarling of Berlin or other places, had been always a plague to him;<sup>1</sup> but his disgust culminated when Nicolai published his *Freuden des jungen Werthers*. To ridicule Nicolai in coarse verses did not serve. Even had not *Werther* been Goethe's own work, he would have been excessively enraged by such shameful treatment of a poem so deep in feeling, so perfect in art. Goethe's mother tells us how on such an occasion he would gnash his teeth, and vent his rage in some most ungodly oath, while his joy in pure poetic beauty would break forth in tears. For the second edition of *Werther* he wrote two mottos, the latter warning the reader not to follow the unhappy example of the hero.<sup>2</sup>

Just after Jacobi's departure (March 2) Goethe revolted at Lili's confidential friendliness to others. His thirsty soul would fain have his beloved live for him alone, adore him with glowing passion; he would have her, love-inspired, penetrate by a glance to the veiled recesses of his heart, be a

<sup>1</sup> Goethe to Auguste, Countess Stolberg [6th-10th March 1775]:—"Ich bin das ausgraben und seziren meines armen *Werthers* so satt. Wo ich in eine Stube trete, find ich das Berliner, etc., Hundezeug; der eine schilt drauf, der andre lobt's, der dritte sagt 'es geht doch an,' und so hetzt mich einer wie der andere." *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 71.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> "Sey ein Mann und folge mir nicht nach." *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 179.—TR.



creature of his love and of his moulding. Lili did indeed cling with deep affection to the youth who so bewitched her ; but she was not capable of that devouring flame of passion which the poet cherished in his breast, and which he breathed into his *Stella*. And the wayward ill-humour, the jealousy which often came upon him, were a very hard trial to the merry maiden, the spoiled household pet. Then her mother and brothers were repelled by many an eccentricity of Lili's lover ; were prejudiced against him on account of his connection with lower circles than their own ; and on the whole, did not think him the husband that a rich banker's daughter might look for ; they did not fail to urge her to put up no longer with his behaviour.

When on the 4th of March he spoke to Tante Fahlmer of his trouble, she spoke comfort to him, and pressed him to finish *Stella* ; she would make a copy of it for Jacobi. On his way back his yearning drove him to Lili, who again charmed him, as he cannot conceal from Tante Fahlmer next day. "I hope to draw you into our circle," he writes ; "by God, Tante, it can't be altogether amiss to you in it. Lili is very dear, and has a most sincere feeling for your worth."<sup>1</sup> In the afternoon he went on a walk round the town with Cornelia's friend Lisette Runkel, and her brother the *Stadt-stallmeister* ; they met Lili with her mother in a carriage. He confesses next day to Tante that he was very "foolish and oddly-behaved" (*dumm und toll*) on this occasion ; and afterwards, instead of going to her, he spent two hours playing *ombre* with Riese and a female friend, Loisgen.

On the rainy afternoon of the 6th March, after despatching two pieces of legal work, he hastens to André in Offenbach. Arrived, he turns in extreme agitation to Auguste :—"In the

<sup>1</sup> Goethe to Johanna Fahlmer [5th March 1775]. *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 68.—TR.

country with very dear people," he writes ; "in suspense,—dear Auguste—God knows I am an unhappy young fellow. . . . Would that I could lie still upon your hand, repose in your eyes. Great God, what the heart of man is !" Next morning (March 7) he writes to his sister, who had presented her husband with a little daughter in the preceding October. To her also he must pour out his lamenting. In the evening he goes on to confide to Gustchen :—"This was a strange day. Have sketched ; written a scene ; O, if I did not write dramas now I should shipwreck. Soon I shall send you one in manuscript. . . . I cannot have it printed ; for I will, God willing, in future, bury in a corner my . . . and children, without dangling it beneath the public nose."

On the 10th back in Frankfurt, he continues this diary-like letter. His head is pretty clear, his heart tolerably free, but immediately he breaks out :—"O best one, how are we to find words to express what we feel." "Hold a poor young fellow to your heart," he concludes. "May the good Father in heaven give you many courageous and happy hours, such as I often have ; and then let the twilight fall tearful and blessed. Amen."<sup>1</sup> Three days later he writes to Tante Fahlmer :—"I am quite unbearable. And therefore busy at sensuous work [sketching]. I cannot come. May God give you to carry out something. With me, things will come to no good end."<sup>2</sup> She urged him to go on with *Stella*. Then he was delighted to hear how Max Brentano, who had gone to her mother, had on March 12 borne a boy, and was doing well ; he might perhaps hope that this new tie would draw the husband closer to the dear wife whom he (Goethe) would be able again to visit in her own

<sup>1</sup> *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 72.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> "Geb' Ihnen Gott was zu treiben. Mit mir nimmts kein gut Ende." Goethe to Johanna Fahlmer [March 13, 1775]. *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 68.—TR.

house, without fear of being stirred to passion by her presence. "Now I am going to Brentano to congratulate him," he writes to Mama Sophie; and in the letter he asks the "dear little mother":—"Is there a time coming which will see us influence one another as friends?"<sup>1</sup> On the same day (the 15th March) he goes again to Offenbach; and thence (March 17) sends to Tante the concluding act of *Stella*, about which he had been very timid. He had meant to return to Frankfurt on the 17th for the concert, but hearing that Lili was coming on a visit to her uncle, the rich manufacturer D'Orville in Offenbach, he resolved to stay. Lili's self-will might torment him—she was still almost a child, she was a pet, she was used to the carefully polite manners of good society, it was no wonder if she did not quite understand him; but she had an essentially noble nature, she had rich gifts, she was a charming maiden who loved him well: and these things were powerful to hold him fast. "Within me there is much that is strange and new," he writes to Tante Fahlmer. "In three hours I hope to see Lili. Dear Tante—until Sunday. Take the maiden to your heart; it will be well for both." The Tante had expressed great pleasure in the first four acts of *Stella*, which she had transcribed for Jacobi; but Goethe feared that the final issue of the story—the possession of *both* *Stella* and *Cäcilie* by the faithless Fernando—would be repellent to her. He writes thus in the same letter:—"I am weary of lamenting the fate of *our sex of people* [those urged by fiery passion], but I will *present* them, they shall know themselves, if it may be, as I have known them, and shall become—if not more restful—yet in their unrest, stronger."<sup>2</sup> His Fernando,

<sup>1</sup> Goethe to Frau von La Roche, March 15, 1775. *Loeper*, pp. 100-1.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> Goethe to Johanna Fahlmer, March 17, 1775. *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 72.—TR.

saved by the infinite love of the two women, is like Werther, a morally weak "Stormer" knowing not self-control, set forth like Werther, not as an example, but as a sign, to what passion indulged without restraint leads. On the 19th he returned to Frankfurt, and at eleven o'clock, before going to bed, he writes to Auguste:—"With me again for a while it has been so between gladness and sadness, that I know not whether I am on earth,—and then it is to me as if I were in heaven."<sup>1</sup>

On the 21st of March he writes beseechingly to Jacobi:—"Stand by me, dear Fritz. I feel as though I were on skates for the first time, alone, and stumbling along the path of life; and *should* all the time be striving for the prize, and for that after which all my soul is yearning."<sup>2</sup> On the same day he speaks more hopefully to Mama Sophie:—"Daily I strive and work to become more worthy. Have too, God be thanked, relay-horses for my further travel."<sup>3</sup> In the union with Lili he hoped to find repose and happiness. Thus he says four days later to Herder:—"It looks as though the threads by which my destiny depends, and which I so long in rotating oscillation jerk up and down, would at length unite. For the rest, all kinds of circumstances make me pretty tame, not, however, taking away the good young courage from me."<sup>4</sup> But that night (the 25th), writing to Auguste, far away, sick of fever, a gloomy foreboding of a time of melancholy falls upon him, a time in which he will flee her and all who are dear to him; then let her pursue him with her letters, save him from himself!<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 74.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* iii. 73-74.—TR.

<sup>3</sup> Goethe to Frau von La Roche, March 21, 1775. *Loeper*, 102-3.—TR.

<sup>4</sup> Goethe to Herder, March 25, 1775. *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 75.—TR.

<sup>5</sup> "Jetzt gute Nacht, und weg mit dem Fieber!—doch wenn du leidest, schreib mir—ich will alles theilen—O dann lass mich auch nicht stecken, edle Seele, zur Zeit der Trübsal, die kommen könnte, wo ich dich flöhe

About this time he gave to Lili the first copy of *Erwin und Elmire*, with the prefixed verses dedicating it to her; he hoped that the pain of the true lover of the drama would work beneficially on her; but a stronger influence was that of her family, which still grew more opposed to him. Frau Schönemann did not care so much for a famous son-in-law as for a rich one, good at business. How it stood with her own affairs at the time we do not know; a few years later the house had to stop payment. On March 28th Goethe, in his dark mood, met friend Merck at Langen. On the same day Klopstock, on the return journey to Hamburg, visiting Goethe found him in "strange agitation."<sup>1</sup>

About the middle of March (1775) had appeared anonymously the farce *Prometheus, Deukalion und seine Recensenten*. This sharp satire on the critics of *Werther* annoyed Goethe exceedingly, because it referred to his Mainz trip, and to the reconciliation through Knebel with Wieland. Yet he thought that nobody who knew him could deem so ill of him as to suppose him capable of ridiculing that reconciliation which he had himself wished for; nor could any reasonable man attribute to him the jokes about the *Iris*, and about the garrulity of his publisher Weygand. But he grew seriously disquieted when he found that everybody—even friend Merck—thought him the author. Even when he heard of Wieland's threat to complain to Goethe's Hereditary Prince of this malicious trifling, he would not consent to disavow the farce publicly; neither to Jacobi nor to any one else would he write anything about the matter; he would take no pains to discover who the

und alle Lieben! Verfolge mich, ich bitte dich, verfolge mich mit deinen Briefen dann, und rette mich von mir selbst!" *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 75.—TR.

<sup>1</sup> Goethe to Knebel, April 14, 1775. *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 79-80.—TR.



real author was.<sup>1</sup> He had a short time before been again disgusted with Wieland, because of a remark in the *Merkur* about "geniuses;" he had written to Tante Fahlmer:—"Eternal enmity be between my seed and their seed."<sup>2</sup> But the remonstrance—that every one recognised his manner in the farce, and that the suspicion founded on this must be highly injurious to him in his relation with the Hereditary Prince of Weimar—brought him at last to resolve on finding out the author,—not far to seek,—and to clear himself at least to his friends by letter; finally, he agreed to let a *Declaration to the public* be printed. When he sent it<sup>3</sup> to Tante Fahlmer about the 8th of April, he was again quite bewitched about Lili. "She was as beautiful as an angel," he wrote, "and I had not seen her for four days. And dear God, how much is she even better than beautiful."<sup>4</sup> The *Declaration*, on oblong octavo, is dated April 9, 1775:—"Not I, but Heinrich Leopold Wagner has written and printed the *Prometheus*, without my participation, without my knowledge." The *Declaration* appeared in the *Frankfurter gelehrte Anzeigen* of the 21st:—"I consider," it says, "this declaration due to those who love me and believe my word. Otherwise, I should be quite content to regard this as an opportunity of quietly learning more exactly the characters of various people from their behaviour towards me." He sent the *Declaration* to Knebel on the 14th, unaware that Knebel, commissioned by the Hereditary Prince of Weimar, had already made inquiry of Salzmann about the farce. On the 15th Goethe sent a copy of the *Declaration* to Klopstock.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Goethe, writing to Johanna Fahlmer [beginning of April 1775], makes this declaration. *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 78.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> See the letter of March 13, 1775, already quoted. *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 68.—TR. <sup>3</sup> In MS.—TR. <sup>4</sup> *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 79.—TR.

<sup>5</sup> See for these letters and a reprint of the *Declaration*, *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 79, 81, 82.—TR.

Jacobi passionately lamented the *dénouement* of *Stella* (the play had been sent to him by Tante Fahlmer) as injurious to morals, and earnestly urged that it should be changed. Goethe was "wild" with him;<sup>1</sup> he had hoped that his friend would, in *Stella* as in *Werther*, recognise the warmth of the writer's heart. Yet he soon grew composed, and wrote Jacobi a "mystic" letter; which he, however, did not send, not deeming it worthy of the nearness of their friendship. Soon he found himself composed enough to speak out his full soul to his friend, who cannot desire to misinterpret him.

On the 14th of April, when sending the *Declaration* to Knebel, he writes that: he falls from one entanglement into another, and is again stuck fast with his poor heart unexpectedly in all participation of the common lot of man, from which he had but just rescued himself with difficulty. He has been doing all kinds of things, and yet but little; a play [*Claudine*] will soon be ready; his civil functions he performs with such mysterious stealth, as though he were engaged in smuggling! To Klopstock, in that letter written on the following day—the 15th April—he confides that he is pretty much as he was when they last parted, only that it often grows worse; but then a dew-drop of the Universal Balsam, which falls from above [he means his confidence in his destiny], makes all well again. At this period he was looking forward very eagerly to the coming of the Counts Stolberg.<sup>2</sup> Beside *Claudine* he had on hands the reading through of Lavater's *Physiognomische Fragmente* in manuscript; on the 19th of

<sup>1</sup> "Wild könnt' ich wohl über Fritzen werden; böß nie." Goethe to Johanna Fahlmer [April 1775]. *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 82.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> Goethe to Auguste Gräfin Stolberg, 15th April 1775:—"Ach Gott Ihre Brüder kommen, unsre Brüder, zu mir!" Then in an addition of the 26th April:—"Wie erwart ich unsere Brüder!" *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 80-1.—TR.

April, just before setting out on a business-journey, he sent the latter part of the first volume to the publisher; he had appended an essay on Rameau, and written a *Lied eines physiognomischen Zeichners*.<sup>1</sup>

A quite unexpected turn in affairs was now brought about through the arrival of the "merchant-spinster" ("*Handelsjungfer*") Helena Dorothea Delph of Heidelberg. This lady, now almost fifty, who, since 1761, had, with her elder sister, carried on the business left by their brother, was on an intimate footing with Frau Schöнемann and the Reformed ("*Reformirten*") families of Frau Schöнемann's circle. She had come to Frankfurt for the Easter Fair, which began on the 18th of April 1775. No sooner had she observed the odd situation of the two lovers than she—a sworn foe to all "*Langen und Bangen*"—resolved to play the mediator. She had herself introduced to Goethe's parents, and managed to persuade away all difficulties with them and with Frau Schöнемann so skilfully that both sides gave her full power to act. So one evening she came to the lovers as they sat together, and exclaimed with triumphant joy:<sup>2</sup>—"Join hands;" confirming her authority by appeal to their parents' approval. Lili did put her hand, however slowly, into that of the poet of *Werther*; a deep drawn sigh and the happy lovers fell into each other's arms, and assured themselves in glowing kisses of the happiness long expected yet so sudden in its coming. This private betrothal must have been subsequent to Goethe's business journey, from which he returned before the 23d April.

<sup>1</sup> See Goethe's letter to Lavater, 19th April 1775. *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 83-4. Goethe returns the original MS. to Lavater, having sent a copy to Gotter.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> In *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, xvii. Buch:—"Exclaimed with her magniloquent air of command." "*Mit ihrem pathetisch gebieterischen Wesen.*"—TR.

Just in the earlier time the young pair seem to have been together a great deal at Offenbach, where Lili stayed with her uncle D'Orville, whose great garden stretched down to the Main ; Goethe with André close by. Lili hung a little heart in gold by a ribbon from her lover's neck, and gifts were not lacking on Goethe's side.

Their happiness remained but a short time at the flood. A satisfactory relation could not be established between the two families ; not the difference of religion alone, but also the difference in mode of living, grew more and more prominent to estrange. Lili's future was painted to her in no attractive colours ; the singularities of her betrothed, whose life more than hers had been passed in bourgeois circles, were insisted on. Then her humours put him out of tune. That his beloved should form herself by him, live only for him, be merged in him, began to show as the futile dream of his jealous soul ; and thus was intensified the uneasiness which began when the yoke of a new love laid upon him proved a fetter to his genius. So the two, loving each other well, became yet more and more divided. Then might the cooler behaviour of Lili's family have easily determined Goethe to attempt an escape from the chains which lay heavy upon him. At present he rather held back from her society, which gave the enemy the more advantage to occupy her mind with adverse thoughts ; and thus did each grow gradually stranger to the other, for they lay passive—a dangerous thing when there are under-currents.

About the 10th of May the Counts Stolberg, by Göttingen and Cassel travelling, came to Frankfurt, where they expected their friend von Haugwitz from Paris. They slept at an inn, but found hospitable reception in the Goethes' house. What a life of freedom here developed, how merrily Goethe's mother—he called her "Frau Aja" from a scene in the

*Haimonskinder*—entered into the youthful, high-spirited fun, lives imperishable in *Dichtung und Wahrheit*.

As Goethe, sorrowing over the decline of Lili's affection, longed to go away from home, he decided on visiting, at Emmendingen, his sister, of whom he had been so long deprived; he would accompany the Stolbergs as far as Strassburg, even already perhaps had planned to go on with them to Switzerland. The very intensity of his suffering for some time back was the measure by which he now abandoned himself to fleet the time carelessly. "It is a great joy to us," writes the elder Stolberg, "that we are to travel with Goethe. A wild, untameable, but very very good young fellow, full of soul and fire. And we love each other so well; from the first hour we were heart friends." Goethe had a comrade in sorrow in the younger Count, Fritz Leopold, who was shortly to hear whether the maiden whom he loved would be his or no. Friend Klinger, too, drew close to the Stolbergs. Fritz Leopold mentions the "new friendship with a young man Klinger who has a good heart and is a grand poet, and has taken up his quarters in our rooms."

Before leaving Frankfurt Goethe informed Herder that he was going to visit his sister for some time. "It is with me as with thee, dear brother," he says. "I play ball against the wall, and shuttlecock with the women. I thought a short time ago I was coming nearer the haven of domestic happiness and firm footing in the genuine joy and sorrow of the earth, but am in miserable fashion flung out again on the wide sea. . . . Thus I dance my life away upon the thread called *fatum congenitum* [the destiny we are born with]! Wilt shortly see some of my fresco-painting [*Claudine*], in which thou wilt be vexed to see side by side nature in true deep feeling (*gut gefühlte Natur*) and odious *locus communis*."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Goethe to Herder [Frankfurt, May 1775]. *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 85-6.—TR.



Early on the morning of the 15th of May 1775, after signing two memorials belonging to one of his cases, he drove with his three companions to Darmstadt. All of them wore Werther uniform—a blue coat, yellow waistcoat and trousers; and all had round gray hats. Merck, whom they visited in Darmstadt, went with them to Mannheim. Though he did not approve of Goethe's journey with the Stolbergs, he was attracted by the noble presence of the younger, Fritz Leopold. In Karlsruhe our travellers went to the court. There, stopping with the Markgraf and Markgräfin, were the two Darmstadt princesses; the younger of them, Luise, the destined bride of the Duke of Weimar, whom Goethe and we have seen starting for Berlin in April 1773, talked with enthusiasm of Switzerland and Lavater. The young poet was enchanted with her. "Luise is an angel," he wrote to Tante; "the gleaming star could not prevent me from picking up some flowers which fell from her bosom, and which I preserve in the pocket-book where the heart is."<sup>1</sup>

On the 21st of May the Weimar princes with von Görtz and Knebel arrived; for the marriage of the Hereditary Prince and Luise was to be concluded here, on which account President von Moser also had come. The Hereditary Prince had a bad cold. He showed himself favourable to Goethe, as did the other princely and distinguished personages. With Knebel Goethe had confidential intercourse; Knebel disliked France very much.

On the evening of the 23d of May our travellers reached Strassburg. Here Goethe had the delight of intimate companionship with Lenz, who had matriculated last autumn, and was now supporting himself mainly by private teaching. They

<sup>1</sup> Goethe to Johanna Fahlmer: "a quarter of a league from Strassburg," Wednesday, May 24, 1775. *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 88-9. "The heart"—the little golden heart which Lili had given him.—Tr.

dined together on May 24th, at the inn to which they had formerly so often resorted, on the Ill, about a quarter of a league from Strassburg. From this inn, after dinner, Goethe writes to Tante, that he hopes something from the stage presentation of *Erwin*, soon to come off in Frankfurt—not as an author. He had asked her<sup>1</sup> to write telling him all about the performance, and whether Lili were present; for he hoped, as we know, that the unhappy lover thus moving and speaking before her on the stage would touch her heart. “This old place now so new again! The Past and the Future.” All is better than he had thought; he finds everything dear and good—perhaps because he loves? “So much this time of the Bear broken free; of the escaped Cat!—I have seen a great, great deal. A grand book the world to learn lessons of discretion from—if it only were of any avail!”<sup>2</sup>

Next day he was witness how Friedrich Stolberg bore the news that his Sophie merely felt friendship towards him, not love. Goethe suffered with his friend;<sup>3</sup> who esteemed his loss greater than the death of his beloved would have been, since now not death, but she herself deprived him of herself. To Goethe, on the cathedral platform—where he found his name uneffaced—all his own Sessenheim love must have been vividly recalled to mind. Probably Lenz at this time gave him by no means the best account of Friederike;<sup>4</sup> so that with his Lili-burthened (*lilischweren*) heart he can hardly have felt any desire to see her.

<sup>1</sup> Writing on May 16, 1775, from Mannheim. *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 86-7.—Tr.

<sup>2</sup> *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 88-9.—Tr.

<sup>3</sup> See Goethe to Auguste Stolberg: Frankfurt, July 25, 1775. *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 91.—Tr.

<sup>4</sup> Anything that Lenz said to Friederike's discredit was, however, untrue.—Tr.

He stayed in Strassburg until the 27th of May, detained by old memories and old friends; among the latter, the good Salzmann, who had been his confidant in the love of five years ago. Then he hastened, without companion, to his sister in Emmendingen; who could only advise him earnestly to break off a connection, a sufficient objection to which, were there no other, would be the inequality in external rank of the families. And yet he could promise her nothing. Here he probably first let his father know that he was going to Switzerland. To Tante Fahlmer, who had given him such a nice account of the performance of *Erwin*, he writes on the 5th of June, shortly before leaving Emmendingen:—"I am going to Schaffhausen to see the Rhine Falls, to wrap myself in the great idea; for yet, I feel, the chief aim of my journey has been missed, and if I return [immediately (*Trans*)], it will be worse with the Bear than before. I know well that I am a fool, but therefore I am one yet. And why should one put out the tiny lamp that shines so prettily in front along one's way of life, and makes the darkness twilight?"<sup>1</sup> From Emmendingen too he sent *Claudine* to Knebel, writing:—"Read it to our Duke in a free hour. No transcribing! I beg particularly (*gar schön*). Thanks for your note. It is a real pleasure that you are not averse to me. To His Serene Highness everything that is heartfelt from me."<sup>2</sup> On the 7th, writing from Schaffhausen, before he has gone to the Rhine Falls, he says to Tante:—"It is right well with me—could I only plunge right deep into the world! I suppose, however, I shall soon be back with you again."<sup>3</sup> His constant fellow-traveller, Love, would draw him homewards.

<sup>1</sup> This letter will be found, *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 87-88; it is there dated: [Strassburg, 22d Mai 1775].—TR.

<sup>2</sup> Goethe to Knebel: Emmendingen, June 4, 1775. *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 89.—TR.

<sup>3</sup> *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 90.—TR.

With the warmest joy he greeted his friend Lavater at Zürich, on the 8th of June. In Lavater's paternal house he enjoyed the happiness of the purest family life; and as he gazed from its roof at the wondrous view of lake and distant snowy mountain-range, a heavenly peace stole over him. The visit of the great poet was a high honour done to Lavater in the presence of numerous secret enemies, who were stirred to still greater jealousy when they found Goethe restrict himself wholly to Lavater and his circle—among all the celebrities of Zürich only visiting the patriarchs of German Literature Bodmer and Breitinger, and Gessner the idyllic poet, whose name was prized even in foreign lands. Those of the opposition were very angry with Goethe for thus slighting them; and after his departure many bitter things were written in Zürich of the author of *Werther*. The close communion with Lavater did the love-sick poet a great deal of good; though Lavater's mild hortation could not blot out the memory of Lili, nor yet produce in him a firm resolve to hold her fast despite all hindrances.

A few days after Goethe the Stolbergs arrived in Zürich, where they too were warmly greeted by Lavater; with Haugwitz they took a country house on the Sihl. On the 12th Goethe informs Mama Sophie that he, in company with Lavater, the Stolbergs, Haugwitz, and other good young fellows, has been to see the peasant Jakob Gujer, called Klijog, in his house at Wermetswyl; and he sends her a piece of bread cut for her at the peasant's table. How he rejoiced to find in this man, whom Hirzel fourteen years before had brought before the world's notice as a "moral philosopher peasant:"—"No ideal from the clouds, thank God! but one of the noblest beings, as this earth from which we too have sprung brings such forth."<sup>1</sup> The "good young fellows" were

<sup>1</sup> Goethe to Frau von Laroche: "At Lavater's desk, the 12th June 1775." *Loefer*, pp. 108-9.—TR.

probably his fellow-townsmen—Passavant, a theological student, now three-and-twenty, intimate with Lavater, and the teacher of music Kayser, now living in Zürich.

As Goethe would not remain in Switzerland as long as the Stolbergs, he set out with Passavant on a delightful journey through the Lesser Cantons. How the love for Lili followed him everywhere, troubling his full delight,—though without it he would have no happiness,—causing him to begin his journey back on the morning of her birthday, June 23, when at the summit of the Gotthard, has been charmingly told us by the poet himself.<sup>1</sup> On that morning of return he kissed the little golden heart, Lili's gift, still hanging on his neck.

On his arrival in Zürich, about the 28th, he again made one of the cheery party of the Stolbergs. With Lavater, all sources of depression or exaltation to either were discussed—the *Physiognomische Fragmente*, the friends they had in common, the petty opponents who only deserved contempt, also repeatedly the relation to Lili. Of new personal acquaintanceships formed by Goethe at this time, the most important were those with Lavater's dear friend Pfenninger, and Frau Barbara Schultheiss, praised by Lavater as "ever the same;" she is greeted in Goethe's letters as "Bäbe." Before Wolfgang left Zürich a letter from his mother, dated June 28, came to Lavater; in it she begs the Counts to whom she entrusted her Wolfgang, to send him back to her now, since the time is growing very long to Frau Aja by herself.

Not until the 5th July 1775 did Goethe leave Zürich; the Stolbergs had two days earlier left for the Lesser Cantons. In Strassburg our poet was again in a very significant way to have his thoughts turned on Weimar. He met there the famous physician Zimmermann from Hannover, who last year

<sup>1</sup> *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, xviii. Buch (*close*) and xix. Buch (*beginning*).—TR.



had written him an enthusiastic letter about *Werther*. Zimmermann, who for a few days—from the 10th until the 14th or 15th—was staying with his son, a Strassburg student, showed Goethe ten silhouettes; among them was one of Frau von Stein, whose husband, in the retinue of the Duke of Weimar, he was already acquainted with. Her face robbed Goethe of three nights of sleep. He wrote under her portrait:—"It would be a glorious spectacle to see how the world mirrors itself in this soul. She sees the world as it is, and yet through the medium of love. Thus, too, gentleness is the general impression."

He had again a friendly time with Lenz and Salzmann. On the occasion of ascending the cathedral he wrote the remarkable *Dritte Wallfahrt nach Erwins Grab* (*Third Pilgrimage to Erwin's Grave*), which connects with the work formerly dedicated to Erwin's memory.<sup>1</sup> When he looked from above on the grand expanse, his glances roamed "homewards, love-wards." On the platform he and Lenz talked of the necessity of true creative power for the production of genuine art work.<sup>2</sup>

In Darmstadt, to his greatest joy, he found Herder, grown much gentler in the two years of separation, and Herder's wife; joined by Merck, they all proceeded to Frankfurt together. Their hearts were opened to each other again; even though Lili were a little forgotten. Herder submitted his *Exposition of the Revelation of John* to Goethe.

To visit Lili, to excuse his unceremonious departure and his silence was a hard task, but the compulsion of love was irresistible; he believed he could not live without the maiden.

<sup>1</sup> For the *Dritte Wallfahrt* see *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 694. *Von Deutscher Baukunst*, it will be remembered, is dedicated:—*D. M. Ervini à Steinbach*. *Der junge Goethe*, ii. 204.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> These particulars from the *Wallfahrt*.—TR.

She seems to have received her repentant truant with open heart. Yet he was not happy; with all her warm affection she, as we have noticed before, lacked that fire of passion which his soul craved, and ugly forebodings crept over him that the connection which her family disliked so was not going to last. And in truth his temporary absence had made it easier for his opponents to cast a slur on his fidelity. Maximiliane Brentano, who during his absence had been much in his mother's society, was now again visited by him at her own house. There, on the evening of the 31st, they "fiddled and piped," so he tells Frau von Laroche.<sup>1</sup> Yet of a letter to Gustchen the portion written on that very day of "fiddling and piping" is full of melancholy.<sup>2</sup>

The three months which followed—the last that he spent in his native city—were the most passion-tossed of all his life. Writing on the 1st of August, he indeed informs Knebel—from whom, and from the Duke, he would fain hear something—that he finds himself a good deal better, quite content with the Past, and full of hope for the Future;<sup>3</sup> but soon that stormy unrest took hold on him again.

We find him at Offenbach on the 3d of August, Lili being there then also. "I have given her thy greeting," he writes to Lavater. "I will immediately send thee her silhouette—womanly. Make something for her in verse which may strengthen and confirm her in what is good. Thou canst do good and thou wilt."<sup>4</sup> The same day, in Lili's room, urged by anguish, he opens his heart to his friend in Copenhagen. He had not sent her any letter since the 26th of April<sup>5</sup>—three

<sup>1</sup> Goethe to Frau von La Roche, August 1, 1775. *Loeper*, pp. 114-115.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 91-2.—TR.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* iii. 92.—TR.

<sup>4</sup> Goethe to Lavater, August 3, 1775. *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 96.—TR.

<sup>5</sup> The letter to Auguste, mentioned half a page back, written partly on

months of silence :—"What depression ! O that I could see everything ! Here in the chamber of the maiden who makes me wretched, yet is not to blame, with the soul of an angel, whose cheerful days I darken ! I ! . . . In vain, that I three months [so long did his journey seem to him !] have wandered in the open air, and drunk through every sense a thousand fresh impressions. Angel ! and I sit again in Offenbach, simple as a child, limited as a parrot on its perch."<sup>1</sup> They missed him in the house—D'Orville's house. Lili, to her surprise, found him in her room, but begged him to remain ; she would go and dress in another room. (According to a family tradition Lili's mother took this piece of heedlessness exceedingly ill.) In the afternoon Lili rode out accompanied by D'Orville and Goethe. "You should have seen the angel in riding-dress on horseback," he writes next day, the 4th, to Lavater ; and, after delivering to his friend the greetings of Lili and the Princess of Waldeck, he proceeds :—"And to me God will be gracious. *N.B.*—I have been for a while back again pious, have my joy in the Lord, and sing psalms unto His Name, thereof shalt thou very soon experience a vibration (*davon du ehstens eine Schwingung haben sollst*)."<sup>2</sup> Lavater is also to note down what he would desire Goethe to see after for him in Italy. Here, accordingly, we find that twelve days after his return he had the Flight to Italy in his mind should a breach ensue. Yet he stayed a considerable time longer in Offenbach with Lili.

July 25th, partly on July 31st, was not yet despatched ; it was lying in Frankfurt at the present date, and was found afterwards and sent on.—*Tr.*

<sup>1</sup> Goethe to Auguste Stolberg [Offenbach], August 3, 1775. *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 93-6.—*Tr.*

<sup>2</sup> Goethe to Lavater, August 4, 1775. *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 96-7 (Is there a reference to the translation of the Song of Solomon in the above?).—*Tr.*

One member of the society around them there was the second Reformed preacher, Johann Ludwig Ewald, two years older than Goethe, and his betrothed, daughter of the Frankfurt merchant Dufay. It was in this time that Goethe fell asleep one night on the *Mühlberg* (not the *Röderberg*), an incident which he has so charmingly described.<sup>1</sup> Only occasionally did he go even so far as Frankfurt.

On the 17th of August we find him writing in D'Orville's house, while Lili at the breakfast-table, in *négligé*, with her back turned to him, sips her coffee. He is writing to the Berlin poetess of nature, Madame Karschin, who thought very highly of him. "Perhaps the invisible scourge of the Eumenides will soon lash me out of my Fatherland, probably not northwards."<sup>2</sup> He speaks much more plainly a few days later, writing to Merck from Frankfurt; he is again miserably stranded, and could give himself a thousand cuffs for not having gone to the devil when he was afloat [was on the Gotthard]. He is on the watch for a new opportunity of getting away; he even thinks of flight against his parents' will, if Merck will advance him some money; at any rate Merck, when next he sees Rath Goethe, must try to procure that Wolfgang be sent to Italy before the year closes.<sup>3</sup> His hope of kindling Lili to passion like that which glows in *Stella* had proved vain; she seemed incapable of such passion, though ready to do anything for her lover, and even—in their happier moments—altogether bewitched by him.

The conflict between hope and desperation dragged on for five weeks more. Writing to Tante Fahlmer at this period—after declaring himself opposed to the publication of Fritz Jacobi's novel, *Allwills Papiere*, in spite of the good things

<sup>1</sup> *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, xvii. Buch.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 97-9.—TR.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* iii. 99-100.—TR.

in it—he goes on :—“ And I—*The Intricacies of Diego and Julia, First Part*—talk always in the deepest melancholy to myself and to my ass, while a whole little world occupies itself with my affairs.”<sup>1</sup> (He refers here to Slawkenbergius’ Tale in *Tristram Shandy*—Bode had lately published a good translation—the tale of the long-nosed Stranger, who, as he rides from Strassburg to Frankfurt, talks, sometimes to himself, sometimes to his mule, sometimes to his Julia :—“ O Julia, my lovely Julia.” At the end of this tale another, “ the tenth of the tenth decade,” “ a tale indeed,” is—not told—but described thus :—“ It sets out with the first interview in the inn at Lyons, when Fernandez left the courteous Stranger [Diego] and Julia alone in her chamber and is over-written, *The Intricacies of Diego and Julia.*”) Goethe’s words signify that, as yet, only the First Part of *his* love-intricacies has been played, causing as much excitement in Frankfurt as did the long nose of that Stranger in Strassburg. In the last sentence he seems to have mischievously chosen the Frankfurt dialect.<sup>2</sup>

To this period falls the touching lament, *Herbstgefühl* ;<sup>3</sup> autumn will ripen the grape-clusters round his window, but not mature his love to bliss. We have no evidence of his state of mind on his birthday—a day always of serious reflection. Lili can hardly have made him happy with a gift as did Lotte in Wetzlar ; he had sent her no token of love on her birthday, though he probably had told her how, on that day, the golden heart had turned his footsteps homewards.

At the beginning of September we find him in Frankfurt, somewhat calmer. On the 2d or 3d he visited the Academi-

<sup>1</sup> Goethe to Johanna Fahlmer [August 1775]. *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 102.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> “ Weilst eine ganze kleine Welt sich nach mir beschafftigt.”—TR.

<sup>3</sup> At first called simply *Im Herbste*, 1775. *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 191-2.—TR.



cian and Professor Sulzer of Berlin, the famous Theorist on Art—Goethe had left his theories far behind<sup>1</sup>—a friend of Zimmermann but of Nicolai too. The sickly man, deeply prejudiced against the poet of *Werther*, could find little pleasure in this “Original Genius,” holding him to be a sort of monstrosity (*Meerwunder*), however pleasant and winning in social intercourse. Herder has spoiled Goethe—he wrote two months later to Zimmermann—Goethe is destroying a hundred others.

Goethe was now urging Lavater to hurry on with the second part of the *Physiognomische Fragmente*. They will make a charming chapter to prove the real line of beauty in the line of love, the point where strength and weakness unite. He sends Lavater a description of the characteristics of Frau von Stein, and of the Marchesa Branconi, who was so revered by Lavater and Zimmermann; the former is the more womanly; “conquers with nets,” while the latter “conquers with darts.”<sup>2</sup> On the 7th of September, amid the confusion of the Fair Procession, that word of Ariosto flashed on him, the People is “worthy of death before birth.”<sup>3</sup> Contrasted with his own mighty pain-begetting struggle, he could not but feel intensely the pettiness, the aimlessness, of the drifting of lower natures, only at whiles earnest in the pursuit of vulgar pleasures.

On the 8th he had once more to present a memorial in court; it was his last; since his return from Switzerland he

<sup>1</sup> See the essay on Sulzer’s *Allgemeine Theorie der schönen Künste* (the first essay which Goethe wrote for the *Frankfurter Anzeigen*; it appeared on February 11, 1772), and the essay on Sulzer’s *Die schönen Künste in ihrem Ursprung*. (appeared December 18, 1772). *Der junge Goethe*, ii. 405, 470.—Tr.

<sup>2</sup> This letter, probably written towards the close of August 1775, will be found *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 100-2.—Tr.

<sup>3</sup> See the letter to Lavater, written in the beginning of September 1775. *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 113-5.—Tr.

had only appeared in court in this case and in one other, undertaken at an earlier time—the dates of his appearance are June 26 and August 7.

He had in this September the pleasure of a visit from Pestalozzi, who was just then founding the institution afterwards so celebrated; Pestalozzi was full of Lavater. Goethe has negotiated successfully with the bookseller Deinet about the printing of Lavater's drama *Abraham und Isaak*. Into this piece, which will make a good wide impression, he would breathe an aroma here and there of his own little cask.<sup>1</sup> Probably he wrote the touching prayer of Abraham before the sacrifice.

On Sunday, the 10th of September, he was at Offenbach with Lili at Ewald's wedding. He had written for the occasion the *Bundeslied*,<sup>2</sup> which was sung by four voices, probably André and his wife, Lili and the poet. The conclusion cannot have been exactly as it now stands, yet it is possible that Goethe, when the quartette had ceased, may have sung alone the last sorrowful verse, which speaks his foreboding that destiny is about to carry him far away. At night, about ten o'clock, his heart felt so oppressed at sight of the happiness of the new-married couple that he had to go out into the night air; he was, as, writing exactly a week later, he tells Auguste, "in the most cruel, glorious, sweet condition" (*in der grausamst-feierlichst-süssesten Lage*) of his life; through the hottest tears of love he looked on the moon and the world, and all around was full of soul and meaning. "And in the distance the horn, and the loud joyance of the wedding guests."<sup>3</sup> Perhaps a passionate utterance of emotion that evening in Lili's presence had given offence.

<sup>1</sup> Goethe to Lavater (*continuation of same letter*). *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 114-5.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 185-6.—TR.      <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* iii. 107.—TR.

Back in Frankfurt on Sept. 11th, he begs Tante Fahlmer to buy him something for Lili in the Fair:—" *Galanterie, Bijouterie*, the newest, the most elegant! You feel it alone and my love too! But sacred between us, not a word of it to Mama. To the Gerocks not a word. I entreat."<sup>1</sup> The rich presents by which he sought to prove his love to Lili (as Ferdinand seeks to prove his love to Ottilie in the *Unterhaltungen deutscher Ausgewanderten*) compelled him to run in debt; probably he made at this time the loan of Jacobi, of which he was reminded seven years later.<sup>2</sup>

The urgency of Lili's mother grew more and more effectual. According to a family tradition, when no other representation was strong enough, this unjust story was told to Lili, that Goethe had betrayed and abandoned the pastor's daughter of Sessenheim. As the Schönemann firm had close business connection with Strassburg, the story of Friederike might easily have reached the family. Lili's friendly confiding manner towards the numerous relatives and friends whom the fair-time brought to the house excited Goethe's jealousy. Fräulein Delph had indeed again appeared in Frankfurt, but she prudently recognised how little her mediation could effect while Lili's family opposed; she invited Goethe to Heidelberg. During this time, probably, was written the humorous poem *Lili's Park*.<sup>3</sup>

In his distress he turned again on Sept. 14 to Gustchen;<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 103.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> On October 2, 1782, Goethe writes to Jacobi about the matter; so breaking a long silence.—TR.

<sup>3</sup> *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 187.—TR.

<sup>4</sup> He wrote a long letter at intervals, from the forenoon of Thursday the 14th of September until 8 o'clock P.M. on Tuesday the 19th. He began another to Auguste, then, on Wednesday the 20th at 8 P.M.; he continues it on Thursday the 21st, Saturday the 23d; then a long gap until Sunday October 8th; then another leap to Weimar, November 22d. *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 103-110.—TR.

the never-seen friend whom he deeply loved ; a Countess of the Empire,<sup>1</sup> alas ! She had urged him, once for all, to give up the maiden who could not respond to his passion. But he felt too deeply that Lili's remoteness from him but drew the cord of her bewitchment tighter. Continuing the letter a couple of hours later, the thought had come :—" May it not be excessive pride, this demand that the maiden should completely comprehend thee, and so comprehending love thee ? I do not, perhaps, comprehend *her* ; and where she is different from me is she not, perhaps, better than me ?" That evening he writes :—" To-day a good afternoon, which is rare—and with great folk, which is rarer still. I have been able to like and esteem two princesses in one room." Probably the Princess of Waldeck and her daughter the Princess of Nassau-Usingen. On Sept. 15th he has a plan of appearing at a masked ball, to take place on the 19th, in old German costume in honour of Lili, for whom he is "booked" ("*deklarirt*") ; but in the afternoon he hears that she will not be at the ball. Her family wanted to avoid a public meeting between the lovers. After a dream-tossed night he has, on the 16th, "an open and good morning ;" then he did something "to give Lili a little pleasure" (probably he sent her that present bought by Tante Fahlmer) ; then strangers called on him ; in the afternoon he plunged into the tumult of the fair.<sup>2</sup> Then, however, he fled to Offenbach ; hurt that Lili should so plainly withdraw herself from his society he will avoid seeing her either at the theatre that evening or at the concert to-morrow—Sunday. At Offenbach, on Sunday

<sup>1</sup> In a letter of Goethe's to the Counts Stolberg he says :—" Gustgen is an angel. Devil take it that she is a Countess of the Empire." *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 115.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> "Chattering foolishly with acquaintances and non-acquaintances."  
—TR.

morning, he writes a scene of *Faust*; probably *Auerbach's Keller*.<sup>1</sup> Back on Monday morning to town, to the "sieve of the Danaides;" arrived, he mixes with the merry crowds of the Fair. Late at night he writes to Auguste:—"What is the life of man! And yet again the many good people who gather to me! the exceeding love which surrounds me! Saw Lili this afternoon [on a walk]; saw her at the theatre. Have had no word to say to her; said nothing either!<sup>2</sup> That I were free! O Gustchen, and yet I tremble to think of the time when she might be indifferent, I without hope. But I remain true to my heart and let the thought pass."

These were the days of the extremest crisis; but one tear more and they would stand asunder. On the morning of Sept. 19 there is again a stirring on Lili's behalf in his heart; yet, defying her, he will go to the ball in a light domino. "I am wretched, astray, lost," he laments to Auguste. In the evening he goes first to the theatre. On his return, before dressing for the ball, at eight o'clock he writes:—"What a life! Shall I go on? or end with this for ever? And yet, dearest, on the other hand, when I feel that, in the midst of all this Nothingness, there are so many sloughs being cast by my heart; that so the convulsive strainings of my foolish little composition abate, my outlook on the world grows cheerier, my intercourse with men surer, more solid, wider; while yet my secret soul continues ever, eternally, alone, dedicated to sacred love, which, by degrees, purges all foreign matter by that Spirit

<sup>1</sup> See the passage *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 107, in which Goethe likens himself to a rat who has taken poison. Compare also the "*altdutsche Tracht*," *Ibid.* iii. 105, with Mephistopheles' attention to costume; Goethe in Lili's room, iii. 95, with Faust in Margarete's; and many other points in these letters to Auguste, already noted by commentators.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> "Hab' kein Wort mit mit ihr zu reden gehabt—auch nichts geredt." Does "*auch nichts geredt*" mean "Nor did Lili say anything"? or does it mean "Nor did I say anything"?—TR.



of Purity, which it *is*, and so at last shall grow pure as gold that is spun—*then* I let things take their course—deceive myself, perhaps,—and thank God.” He went to the ball then, and stayed at it until six next morning; danced only two minuets, but gave his companionship to a “sweet maiden” who had a cough. On the afternoon of Sept. 20 he visits the Princes of Meiningen. At the theatre he speaks seven words to Lili. He had now conquered; his heart had spoken; he must give up his beloved since she was so entirely subject to her mother’s influence; she could never belong exclusively to him.

Immediately after this Zimmermann, whom Goethe had invited through Lavater, came to Frankfurt with his daughter, a girl of nineteen, whom he had just brought from Lausanne. This girl, yearning for her lover, was reserved towards Zimmermann himself, but Frau Aja knew how to win her affection and confidence. Goethe says:—“She is not locked in, only has stepped back, and gently pushed the door to.”<sup>1</sup> At this time, beside the Princes of Meiningen, who had invited Goethe to visit them, the Duke of Weimar was in Frankfurt; he had entered on his reign on the 3d of September (1775) and was going to bring home his bride from Karlsruhe. Zimmermann saw with his own eyes how the Duke was in love with Goethe. Writing to Frau von Stein, he says that he passed the happiest days of his life in Goethe’s house, where he observed with wonder the affectionate behaviour of the great poet to his parents.<sup>2</sup>

Goethe might well feel deep gratitude due to those who had borne with him so lovingly in the late time of perplexity.

<sup>1</sup> Goethe to Lavater [end of September 1775]. *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 112.—Tr.

<sup>2</sup> In this letter Zimmermann told Charlotte von Stein what Goethe, in July 1775, had written under her silhouette.—Tr.

The day after Zimmermann's departure he writes to Lavater :—"I lay in bed this morning until ten o'clock, to nurse a cold ; still more to rouse to life again within me the home feelings which the godless excitement of the last days had quite flittered away. My father and mother came to the bedside ; there was confidential chat ; I have drunk my tea, and so all feels better. I have again a feeling of *habitation* within my four walls, however long it lasts."<sup>1</sup>

But already a new life was provided him. When the Duke of Weimar, whom Goethe had visited several times, left for Karlsruhe, he had invited the poet to accompany himself and his bride on their return to Weimar. Goethe felt it a call of fate, for Lili being lost to him, Frankfurt, notwithstanding its many friendly faces, would be unendurable. He did not, indeed, contemplate a very long stay at Weimar ; "there, too," he wrote to Merck, "all sorts of Good, and Whole, and Half will be found ;"<sup>2</sup> he also hoped, as he tells Mama Sophie, to prepare something friendly for Wieland's old days.<sup>3</sup>

In the interim, before the arrival of the Duke and his bride, Goethe remained quietly in Frankfurt ; he paid, too, a visit of parting to Offenbach. There report will have him present, playing merry pranks, at the baptism of a son of André, who was born on the 6th of October ; this boy was afterwards a celebrated composer, theorist, and publisher. The invitation to Weimar was a defence and shield against all gossip. No law work at this time, except that, as proctor for

<sup>1</sup> *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 111.—Tr.

<sup>2</sup> Goethe to Merck [October 1775]. *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 116.—Tr.

<sup>3</sup> Goethe to Frau von La Roche, October 11, 1775. *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 116-117. *Loefer*, pp. 117-8. (Loefer calls attention to another *Faust* note in this letter :—"Dass das Schicksal den Müttern solche Schwerter nach dem Herzen zückt.")—Tr.

the heirs of Fräulein Klettenberg he, in October, drew up a receipt for the effects ; even at Weimar the adjustment of the affairs of his dear dead friend was to occupy him.

To this period probably falls his free translation of the Song of Solomon ; "the most splendid collection of love lyrics that God has made."<sup>1</sup> Besides he looked more closely into the sources of his *Egmont*, and tried to complete this "Volk" drama which he liked so well. It was at this time, too, probably, that the beginning of a novel which he brought to Weimar was written.

Writing to his old friend Merck after a long silence he asks the loan of ten carolins ; he had incurred debts lately, and did not wish to make his father angry. Some time earlier he, probably from lack of money, had given over his *Stella* and *Claudine* to Merck, who was to find publishers for them. For he had fallen out with all who had published for him as yet, believing that they had treated him ill ; in general had such a grudge against booksellers that he objected to personal negotiating with them, and, strange enough, he would not trouble Reich, his old Leipzig friend, with his writings, because publishing was a business matter. Thus the poet of *Götz* and *Werther* found it hard to get a publisher for his latest works !

The Duke of Weimar and his bride arrived in Frankfurt on the 12th of October. When leaving on the 13th they begged Goethe in the most friendly way to follow them to Weimar, in the company of *Kammerrath*<sup>2</sup> von Kalb, now left behind in

<sup>1</sup> So Goethe tells Merck in the letter already once quoted, and referred to again in the following paragraph. *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 116. See the translation reprinted—fragmentary in Schöll, *Briefe und Aufsätze Goethes*, 1846, p. 155-6—entire in Loeper, *Goethe-Laroche*, 127-139.—  
TR.

<sup>2</sup> *Kammerrath*=Member of the Board of Finance. Not to confound

Karlsruhe ; in a few days Kalb was to arrive with a new landau from Strassburg. Goethe bade farewell to all his friends, that he might be ready for departure at any moment. He was to take with him, as servant, the faithful Philipp Seidel. But there was the most incomprehensible delay in the arrival of the carriage, for Kalb was so thoughtless as not to write a word of explanation. To escape the buzz of tongues Goethe remained shut up at home, so that everywhere his friends supposed him gone. Only at night, wrapped in a long cloak, did he venture to roam about the city ; only on one maiden whom he held dear—probably she with whom he had talked at the ball on the 19th of September—did he venture to call ; where, in order to prevent recognition, he had to sit in the children's playroom.

From this room he writes about six o'clock on the evening of the 18th of October to Bürger :—"The first moments of collectedness, which by a crazy turn of things, by a *lettre de cachet* of destiny, have fallen upon my heart," after that most perplexed three-quarters of a year.<sup>1</sup> How it shall fare with him now God knows ; there will be yet greater disquietude, yet more perplexity for him ; then will he think with pleasure of the present moment. He has written all sorts of things that will give Bürger a good hour [he more particularly means *Stella* and *Faust*] ; "yet are we one and all sinners, and fall short of the glory which we should have in the presence of our Mother Nature."<sup>2</sup>

The longer the delay, the more confident and annoying grew his father's assertion that they were making fun of Goethe to avenge the satire on Wieland. Meanwhile *Egmont*

with *Kammerherr* = Chamberlain. *Kammer* has distinct meanings in the two words.—TR.

<sup>1</sup> See *ante*, p. 268.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 118-119.—TR.

grew rapidly ; so did his affection for the young maiden, the only friend whom he saw in this uneasy time.

At last, since he would neither go alone to Weimar, nor stay in Frankfurt, he yielded to his father's persuading and agreed to go to Italy. Before setting out he begged Knebel to send him the letters and packets which might have come to Weimar for him ;<sup>1</sup> for he had told his friends to address to him either at Privy-Councillor Karl von Kalb's, where he was to have stopped, or at Wieland's house. He said nothing to Knebel of the proposed flight to Italy, on which he set forth October 30. How, beginning this journey, from which a delightful fragment of diary is still preserved,<sup>2</sup> he delayed—hoping that the carriage would yet arrive in Frankfurt—some days at the house of Fräulein Delph in Heidelberg, (where, probably, he addressed to Lili's little golden heart that song<sup>3</sup> which he erroneously attributes to the summit of the Gott-hard) ; how Fräulein Delph would have him marry the daughter of *Landschreiber* and *Hofrath*<sup>4</sup> Wrede, father of the Prince von Wrede of a later time ; how the timely arrival of a courier from Kalb summoned him back to Frankfurt ; how with difficulty he delivered himself from the importunity of his hostess, who would fain have kept him for the Palatinate : all is to be read in Goethe's charming narrative.<sup>5</sup>

Perhaps, before leaving Frankfurt, he got the twenty thalers, the price demanded for *Stella* by Merck, and forwarded by bookseller Mylius of Berlin to Weimar, probably accompanied by the remark that the price was rather high, an

<sup>1</sup> Goethe to Knebel, October 1775. *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 118.—Tr.

<sup>2</sup> *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 697-9.—Tr.

<sup>3</sup> "Angedenken du verklungner Freude." *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 183. *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, xix. Buch.—Tr.

<sup>4</sup> *Landschreiber*=Clerk of a provincial court. *Hofrath*=Aulic Councillor or Court Councillor.—Tr.

<sup>5</sup> *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, xx. Buch (*end*).—Tr.



opinion which Mylius had certainly signified to Merck already. If so the strange coincidence must have seemed like a piece of mockery to him; *Stella*, now reckoned dear at a few thalers, recalled the early time of love for Lili, in whom it had failed to strike the passionate chord.

It is odd that shortly before he left Frankfurt, on the 2d November, he wrote begging friend Reich to procure for him, and send by post-car, eleven of Hamann's works.<sup>1</sup> What impelled him just at this moment to Hamann!

<sup>1</sup> *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 120.—TR.

BOOK IV.

THE WEIMAR YEARS OF SERVICE

1775—1786



## CHAPTER I.

FROM GOETHE'S ARRIVAL IN WEIMAR TO HIS APPOINTMENT ON  
THE COUNCIL.

NOVEMBER 1775—JUNE 1776.

ON the 7th of November 1775, at about five o'clock in the morning, the Duke's landau, which had travelled all night through with *Kammerrath* von Kalb, Goethe, and Goethe's servant, Philipp Seidel, arrived in Weimar.

Johann August Alexander von Kalb was the son of Efficient (*wirklich*) *Geheimerath* and *Kammerpräsident*<sup>1</sup> Karl Alexander von Kalb, who, four years ago, had in vain sought release from his post. The son had been a *Kammerrath* three years. During the long drive Goethe had had time enough to put many questions to his companion, who, thoughtless and giddy, was yet well versed in Weimar affairs; and Goethe learned all that was useful for determining his conduct on arrival. He found rooms for his reception prepared in Kalb's father's house. To the first midday meal a large company of guests had been invited in honour of the poet. Here Wieland, whom they set beside Goethe, first saw the poet of *Werther*, and at once fell in love with the splendid youth, nobly forgetting all his ridicule. The younger Kalb probably

<sup>1</sup> *Geheimerath* = Member of the Privy Council. *Kammerpräsident* = President of the Board of Finance.—TR.

conducted Goethe to the Duke, -who brought him to the Duchess. That evening there was free Assembly (*Redoute*) at Court, and Goethe had an opportunity of making acquaint-



FIG. 18. Karl August, Duke of Sachsen-Weimar-Eisenach. After an engraving by Lips (1780).

ance with high life. Frau von Stein was just then staying at her estate Kochberg, near Rudolstadt.

To the Duchess, now but three weeks in Weimar, the careless, jolly life that her husband still kept up with the crack-brained comrades of his youth, the lack of befitting house-room, the absence of court etiquette, were extremely trying. The Castle of Weimar had been burnt down in May 1774, and so the House then being built for the Estates of



Weimar, had in the summer of 1774 to be hastily made into the residence of the Princes, a purpose for which it was not suited. There was much improvement to be desired whether you regarded its accommodation of room-space, its hurried fittings up, its decoration. At the time of Goethe's arrival the Duke had appointed no Chamberlains (*Kammerherren*), to the extreme annoyance of the Duchess and her Master of the Household (*Oberhofmeister*), the grave Count von Görtz. The Duchess was afraid that on Goethe's coming her husband's wild doings would become yet wilder.

The Dowager Duchess, now but thirty-six, very kind-hearted, fond of fun, earnestly delighting in Literature and Art, received the famous poet with great cordiality. On the other hand Prince Constantin, somewhat delicate, inclined to quiet domestic enjoyments, was rather restrained in manner towards the favourite of his brother. Prince Constantin lived just then with his mother in the "Palais" on the Esplanade; not until the year following did he remove with Knebel to the domain of Tiefurt, which had been made ready for him; it lies about three-quarters of a league east of Weimar.

On the 8th of November we find Goethe dining at the Court; as he is not of the nobility, and has no military or civil rank, he has to sit at the Marshal's table. We meet him there again on the 10th and 12th. He much preferred dining with the Duke in his private room, or at Wieland's house, or Knebel's, or even with the Duchess Amalia. Though his vivacious frankness made Wieland a little timorous a few times, they were soon on terms of the warmest friendship. (Writing on November 10th to Jacobi, Wieland says:—"Since this morning my soul is full of Goethe, as is a dewdrop of the morning sun;" he was to Wieland unspeakably great, and important, and dear.) Knebel, too, pleased Goethe. To his



FIG. 19. The Duchess Amalia. After the painting by Angelica Kauffmann.

delight he found his fellow-townsmen, George Melchior Kraus, here in Weimar, the head of the newly-established Drawing School for boys and girls. He was soon on the best terms with the friends of the Duke's youth, the inseparable comrades of the present ; with the handsome, tall, drily witty *Hof-und Jagdjunker* von Wedel ; with the jovial *Hof-und Regierungsrath*<sup>1</sup> Hildebrand von Einsiedel, of fine culture, an enthusiastic lover of poetry and music. And Goethe was soon intimate with the Duke's private secretary Bertuch, two years his senior, like himself a lawyer and a writer of drama !

Being the Duke's guest Goethe could not refuse to join in the boisterous doings to which he was invited ; indeed the Duke, thinking to give his new friend pleasure, grew for the time noisier and wilder than ever. Thus the Duchess found each day more cause to view the poet's arrival with disfavour, even had not Görtz, of whom she thought so much, and other courtiers, been enraged to see her husband on such familiar terms with the young poet, to whose charge, of course, was laid much that displeased them in the Duke's behaviour. In any case her stiff, aristocratic pride would have felt hurt by this close intimacy with one of burgher rank, though she recognised the intellectual merit of the splendid youth. The Duke immediately gave Goethe the familiar "*Du*," while the latter replied to his "dear, gracious master" with "*Sie*"—only using "*Du*" in moments of the greatest familiarity—or called the Duke his "Karl." His letters never ventured on the familiar mode of address.

Frau von Stein had returned about the 10th of November from Kochberg ; she was at this time a great sufferer, life had almost entirely lost charm for her. The Duke himself one

<sup>1</sup> *Hof-und Jagdjunker* = Gentleman or Page of the Court and of the Hunt. *Hof-und Regierungsrath* = Court Councillor and Government Councillor.—Tr.

evening conducted his new friend to her ; her husband, *Oberstallmeister* von Stein, and several acquaintances were present. The impression which she made at the moment on the young poet, who had fallen in love with her silhouette, was not so great as he had expected. For, though the high-born lady was not yet three and thirty, she—already mother of seven children—was



FIG. 20. Charlotte Albertine Ernestine von Stein. After the photograph of the portrait which she, between two mirrors, sketched herself.

drooping and ill ; besides at this first visit, and in the presence of a considerable company, she may have been rather restrained in manner. Yet her soul looked out on him clear and sympathetic through her great powerful eyes.

A fortnight of the most confidential intercourse with the young Duke had passed, when Goethe wrote to good Tante Fahlmer in Frankfurt :—"God knows what I am destined for,

that I am brought through schools so various. This one gives my life a new impulsion, and all will be well. I can tell you nothing of my doings: it is too complicated; but all goes as could be wished. It makes a wonderful sensation here, as is to be expected. Wieland is very dear; we are always together, and I am only too fond of being with his children. His wife is thoroughly worthy." He greets the "dear" Gerocks and Maximiliane Brentano:—"Write me something about the fortunes of these unhappy ones. Adieu! We shall have good times together yet upon this earth."<sup>1</sup>

On the morning of the 27th he went with the Duke to Erfurt to visit the Statthalter Dalberg. Kind-hearted, intellectual, cultured, a skilful statesman, this Catholic prelate was one of the most confidential friends of the Weimar Court.<sup>2</sup> He had gone to Weimar the day before Goethe's arrival in order to make his acquaintance. Goethe felt much attracted by him.

On the same morning (Nov. 27) the Stolbergs arrived in Weimar, and were delighted to hear of Goethe's being with the Duke. They drove over on the 28th with the whole Court to Erfurt, where they greeted their "wolf" with vigorous rejoicing. During their stay, which lasted until the 3d of December, the maddest doings went on: Fritz Stolberg especially knew no limits in his wild self-abandonment. Christian writes:—"We like our life here right well. We live with real good people—with our wolf and the sovereign family of the place, who are very good: we go with them to hunt; we ride and drive out, and go to the masquerade." And after they had left, he writes:—"We were very happy there. Our

<sup>1</sup> Goethe to Johanna Fahlmer, Weimar, November 22, 1775. *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 121.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> For a portrait of Statthalter Karl von Dalberg, see Düntzer's *Life of Schiller*.—TR.



Goethe was there and is there still ; I have come to love him even better than before. The whole ducal family is like no other sovereign family. You can have intercourse with all of them just as if they were human beings like ourselves. You know Lowischen [the Duchess] from my description [in an earlier letter]. Still the same angel ! The old Duchess the image of personified good sense, and so charming, so natural withal. The Duke is a splendid youth of great promise, and so is his brother."

The Stolbergs wanted Goethe to go with them by Dessau and Berlin to Hamburg ; but the Duke would not hear of it, however much the poet may perhaps have wished to see his Gustchen. He did not accept Karl August's invitation to visit the Rudolstadt Court with him ; he did not choose to appear at a foreign court as the Duke's favourite. He used the occasion to go and see Frau von Stein at Kochberg, where still, on the inner surface of the simple writing-table, "Goethe den 6. Dcbr. 75," written by his own hand, can be read. Here in her quiet domestic life the noble lady came much nearer to him : she spoke with keen insight and warm feeling of the misunderstandings at the Court, especially of the unhappiness of the Duchess ; and gave him a deep glance into her own pure loving soul. And her exhortation to work on the Duke that a better state of things might come about did not remain unheeded, though he fully recognised how prudently he must act in the matter in order to do good.

He had read aloud his unprinted works to the Duke and his friends, and had especially won great applause by his *Stella*, *Egmont*, and *Faust*. Probably it was the Duke who proposed the founding of a literary society to meet every Saturday morning over wine and punch. Prince Constantin, Wedel, Einsiedel, Knebel, Wieland, and *Hofrath* Albrecht (Jerusalem's stepson, mathematical tutor to the Prince), all joined

this society. They amused themselves by composing satirical verses on each other, which they called *Matinées*, because the society met in the morning.

After the Duke's society, Goethe valued most that which he found in Wieland's quiet family circle. Of Wieland he made a complete confidant. If Goethe had been annoyed at the *Merkur*, he now saw that it was displeasing to Wieland himself, who, however, needed the income it brought for his family expenses. So Goethe gladly contributed, and moved his friends to sympathy in it.

The cause of his prolonged stay in Weimar was the question of appointing Herder as Superintendent-General. Being asked by the Duke whom he would recommend to fill up this post, now vacant for almost five years, Goethe proposed Herder; and was at once commissioned to inquire of Herder whether he would come.<sup>1</sup> Herder's "yes" delighted Goethe very much, who now felt it a point of honour to carry the appointment despite all opposition—for the moment the clergy heard of it they were tooth and nail against it.

The enemies of the foreign favourite were thus numerous reinforced. In him was seen the Evil Principle, to blame for all that they could have wished otherwise in the Duke—who, in reality, from the beginning, always did just according to his own will and pleasure. The leader of the party of opposition was Count Görtz, who continually stirred the anger of the Duchess to flame. But even *Oberstallmeister* von Stein and his wife were among the malcontents; even Charlotte von Stein failed to see that Goethe could not play the austere Mentor with the self-willed Duke, but must at the first humour his waywardness; must wait until his fullest trust were won before speaking unvarnished opinions, before venturing to urge

<sup>1</sup> Goethe to Herder [about the 10th of December 1775]. *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 122.—TR.

deliberation and quietness. Thus Goethe did not oppose when the Duke invited the ex-Lieutenant-Colonel (in the Sardinian service) Sigmund von Seckendorff of Baireuth, to come to Weimar before Christmas (1775), in order to enter on the office of Chamberlain and Privy Councillor of Legation, an office promised to him before Karl August had become Duke. In any case Goethe did not at this time purpose remaining in Weimar.<sup>1</sup> He indeed writes to Lavater on the 22d of December (1775), that, in Weimar he feels as if among his own people; the Duke grows daily more valued by him, daily they become more fast allied. But the Duke's confidence and the free life were his only subjects of self-gratulation; he is "driven about in a dispersed kind of living, and in distraction from morning to night" ("*der ich in verbreiteter Wirthschaft, und Zerstreuung von Morgens zu Nacht umgetrieben werde*").<sup>2</sup> Accordingly he did not go with the Duke on December 23 to the Court of Gotha, where, indeed, at this time, our poet was not prized; Gotter, his friend of the Wetzlar days, who owed so much to French influences, bore the palm there.

A couple of days before Christmas Goethe rode with Kalb, Einsiedel, and Bertuch, through Jena, to the hamlet of Waldeck. They stopped at the house of Forester Slevoigt, whose pretty daughter Bertuch and Kraus wooed in emulation. From this place Goethe wrote to the Duke;<sup>3</sup> even

<sup>1</sup> Goethe to Herder, Stetten near Erfurt, January 2, 1776:—"Ich wünsche Dich meinem Herzog und ihn Dir. Es wird euch beiden wohl thun, und—ja, lieber Bruder, ich muss das stiften *eh' ich scheide*." *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 130.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> Goethe to Lavater, Friday, December 22, 1775. *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 122-3; (Goethe erroneously dates the letter, Friday, December 21).—TR.

<sup>3</sup> Goethe to Karl August: Waldeck, December 23, 1775, continued on Sunday the 24th, and on Christmas Day. *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 124-8.—TR.

copying down some verses which he had sung softly to Lili in the darkness as he and his comrades rode towards the pine-forest. The verses express his yearning remembrance of his beloved, who yet shall find true joy and calm only with souls direct and honest like her own. (So Goethe had confided the secret of his heart to the Duke.) Their merry time in Waldeck is described in this diary-like letter. They skated. Goethe had already been skating at Weimar with immense enjoyment,<sup>1</sup> and stimulated others to imitation; his servant Philipp instructed the beginners. In July 1776 we find Goethe's father writing that Wolfgang has introduced skating and other good fashions into Weimar.

The Duke wrote from Gotha reiterating his wish that Goethe would come thither, as the people were only too curious about him. Yet the poet could not yield; on the other hand, he gladly went on the 30th with the Duke to see Dalberg in Erfurt. Thence, in glad consciousness of his influence over the Duke, he writes on Dec. 31 to Lavater, that he is growing daily more skilled in steering on the ocean of humanity; is far at sea.<sup>2</sup> On New Year's Day (1776) he left Erfurt for Stetten, the country seat of Frau von Keller, where he found Wieland. The latter wrote to Frau von Laroche, that Goethe has been so good, so winning—so unspeakably winning—that they had all like fools fallen in love with him. So it is with the Duke, too, whose all he is, who will never be able to let him go.

The chief matter of interest now was Herder's appointment; the Duke was as much for it as Goethe. To hurry

<sup>1</sup> See the *Eis-Lebens-Lied*, composed when on the ice at Weimar in December 1775, and, in truth, a record of more than skating. *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 192.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> Goethe to Lavater, Erfurt, "the last day of the year 75." *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 129.—TR.

it the Duke at length commissioned Goethe to treat with the councillors and the President of the Consistorium, which he did in such summary fashion, that about the 20th of January he could write to Herder:—"I have driven the fellows along with tip-top scourges (*trefflichen Hetzpeitschen*), and without much more delay you will receive your summons. . . . Perhaps I will stop a while too."<sup>1</sup> This personal interference of Goethe's must have roused bitter feelings. He was himself just then inconvenienced by want of money, not having reckoned on so long a stay. On the 5th of January he had begged Tante Fahlmer and his mother to consult whether his father would not be moved "by all the reflecting grandeur of his son" to give him 200 gulden or even less. If they think he would not, will they get Merck to lend it.<sup>2</sup> Not until a fortnight later (January 19) did he get the money from Merck. When writing to acknowledge it Goethe says:—"I am now quite entangled in all Court affairs and political affairs, and shall hardly be able to get away. My position is advantageous enough, and the Duchies Weimar and Eisenach are at any rate a stage on which to try how the part of man of the world becomes one. I am not over hasty in the matter, and freedom and a competency (*Genüge*) will be the main conditions of the new arrangement."<sup>3</sup> He had by this time engaged the Duke to order the President of the Supreme Consistory to appoint Herder Chief Court Preacher, Chief Councillor of Consistory, Ecclesiastical Councillor, and General Superintendent.

But the Duke was not the only magnet to keep him in

<sup>1</sup> *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 131.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> Goethe to Johanna Fahlmer [January 5, 1776]. *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 132.—TR.

<sup>3</sup> Goethe to Merck, Weimar, January 22, 1776. *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 134.—TR.



Weimar. Since the middle of January 1776 a deep love for Frau von Stein had been growing. He had explained to her his relation with the Duke, whose extravagances he often joins in solely that he may retain influence; but it is his fixed purpose to cultivate the Duke's excellent qualities to the general benefit and to the happiness of their possessor; to waken in him with all speed real interest in the country and pleasure in practical activity. But one day calling on her, Goethe allowed himself to be carried away to such a passionate declaration of his love, that she felt it needful not to see him for several days: she did not even appear at the *Redoute* of January 26. "The question keeps throbbing damnably in heart and head—'Shall I go or stay?'" he writes to her on the 29th, in great agitation.<sup>1</sup> But he had made up his mind long ago: he could not endure to be without Charlotte's intimate trust; and so he must submit to all that seemed to her necessary to keep their relation one of the purest Platonic love. These passionate outbreaks are best understood when we compare them with those of the Wetzlar period. Though he had renounced Charlotte Buff in full recognition of Kestner's rights, yet, in the words of the latter, there had been "many remarkable scenes." Charlotte von Stein had, by the power of her pure womanhood, by her mild gentleness, by her loving spirit, roused in him a passion the outbursts of which she rebuked with the firmness she owed to her duty and her honour, and punished by temporary withdrawal of her society. To the last-named measure she was again compelled to resort about the 10th of February; this time, however, not only did

<sup>1</sup> We are now soon to lose the invaluable companionship of *Der junge Goethe*. For a general collection of Goethe's letters henceforward I have used *Goethe's Briefe mit geschichtlichen Einleitungen und Erläuterungen: Berlin, 1856*. This, however, must be supplemented by the many collections since published, and even by some previously published.—TR.

she absent herself from the *Redoute*, but just before Shrovetide went without giving him a word of notice to Kochberg. On Feb. 12, on the side of the Ettersberg, he made the little poem *Wanderers Nachtlied*,<sup>1</sup> a thrilling utterance of his yearning for inward peace.

The Duke and he now traversed the country in all directions; there was no lack of crackbrained frolic on the part of the young prince, whose freedom had not yet lost the charm of being new. On the 14th of February Goethe writes to dear Tante Fahlmer:—"Herder has accepted the call to be Superintendent-General. Probably, too, I shall stay and play my part as well as I can; and so long as seems good to myself and to Destiny. Even were it but for a few years, it is yet better than the inactive life at home, where, with the best will, I can do nothing. Here, however, I have a couple of Duchies before me. At present I am engaged in just learning the country; it is at any rate good fun. And the Duke thus acquires love for work; and because I know him entirely I am perfectly easy on many matters. I am leading a delightful home-life with Wieland; I dine and sup with him when I am not at Court. The girls here are very pretty and nice; I am on good terms with all of them. A noble soul is the Frau von Stein, to whom I am, so one might say, fixed and nestled (*geheftet und genistet*). Louise [the Duchess] and I live only in glances and syllables together; she is and always will be an angel. With the Duchess Mother I have very good times, and we carry on all sorts of jokes and pranks. You would not believe how many good youngsters and good heads are assembled here: we keep together, are very cordial among ourselves, and dramatise one another; and hold the Court at a distance."<sup>2</sup> Here indeed he shows only the bright side.

<sup>1</sup> "Der du von dem Himmel bist." *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 194.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 135-6.—TR.

It was about this time that the Duke submitted the new disposition of office in the Privy Council—the highest administrative body of the two Duchies—to Privy-Councillor (*Geheimerath*) Fritsch, who had hitherto occupied the second place in it. According to the Duke's plan, Fritsch was now to take the first place; the second was then to fall to a *Geheimerath* Tabor, to be summoned from Kurmainz—probably at Dalberg's recommendation. The fourth place was to fall to Goethe, with the title Privy Assistant-Councillor (*Geheimer Assistenzrath*). Fritsch made grave objection to both the new appointments; in particular he urged Goethe's "unfitness for so considerable a post." For the time the matter slumbered; but the Court party continued to grow more bitter in its opposition to the favourite, who continued to grow more dangerously powerful. On the 19th of February we find Goethe himself compelled to write to the good Tante:—"Oberstallmeister von Stein is to pass through Frankfurt very soon, and he will visit my father and mother. He is a worthy man—deserves a friendly reception; only let no one appear too *enraptured* with my position here. Further, he is not altogether pleased with the Duke, like the greater number at the Court, because he (the Duke) does not dance to their piping; and both in public and in private I am blamed for it."<sup>1</sup> Malcontent of the malcontents was Seckendorff, who, indeed, found a hoped-for post of trust occupied by Goethe, and who, besides, as a punctilious courtier, must have seen much to desire in the Duke's behaviour. The Duke, Seckendorff complained, does not come forth from the circle of persons who have had the art to win upon him; and he faithfully observes the principle of these counsellors—that there is no such thing as propriety and decorum; that all existing arrange-

<sup>1</sup> *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 137. (This letter begins: "Liebe Tante, ein politisch Lied!")—TR.

ments have merely been the issue of caprice, and must be set aside by the head of the State. And yet in reality the Duke was following solely his own regardless will, and Goethe exerted his influence but to moderate or to encourage resistance to the lust of power of others !

At this time, Goethe, not wishing any longer to be a burden to Kalb, took the so-called little *Jägerhaus*, then the last house next the *Frauenthor*, on the same side of the Belvedere with Wieland's house. The present town-hall (*Stadtgericht*) was built on this site in 1836. Another entrance fee as citizen of Weimar he paid on Shrove-Monday the 19th of February by playing at the citizens' amateur theatre the part of Belcour in Cumberland's *West Indian*. At the *Redoute* of the 23d, the Temptations of St. Anthony were presented after a picture. Goethe had charge of the arrangements for this display, which cost the Court 120 thalers. He himself as the Devil of Pride went on stilts, had wings made of peacock-tail feathers, and was enormously puffed-out ; the Saint in the end drove away all the devils with a rebuke. "All was natural and dreadful, not absurd ; as good as two comedies," writes Philipp Seidel.

Not until Thursday the 22d of February did Frau von Stein, who had returned on Tuesday to Weimar, receive Goethe. In reading aloud a novel, however, he vividly conceived himself into the hero's position, and again broke forth in passionate self-utterance. She lovingly rebuked him for this extraordinary behaviour ; for she earnestly wished to maintain the beautiful relation of intimate confidence, which was impossible if he forgot what was her obligation as wife and mother, and ventured to claim more than a sister's love from her. How far he was from self-mastery is seen in his expression :—"Thou only one, whom I can love so—and yet I live ever half in fear" [that he would be carried away].<sup>1</sup> She will

<sup>1</sup> Goethe to Frau von Stein, 23d of February 1776 ; written at night, after the Assembly in which he had played the Devil of Pride.—TR.

not wean him from his improprieties, he remarks, farther on ; these would only “end with his unrest and his love in the grave.” With her dark presentiment that there was no enduring happiness in store for her, she must have had but little hope that the confidential relation through which she desired to exert a calming and guiding influence on the great poet would not be shattered by the violence of his passion.

On the 6th of March Goethe writes to Johanna Fahlmer : —“ I remain here, have taken a nice lodging ; but an *establishment* and a *portion* is *due* to me from my father. This my mother may introduce after her own fashion, only she must be no *child*,<sup>1</sup> as I am *brother* and *everything* of a prince. The Duke has again granted me a hundred ducats—granted—given—what you will. I am to him what I can be, and he to me what he can be ;—that may now continue how it can and long as it can.”<sup>2</sup> Gifts were not oppressive from such a friend as Karl August ; but this did not prevent Goethe from claiming the material aid to his support which he believed his father to owe. His sister, beside more than 1350 gulden of dowry, received annual interest of four per cent on a capital of 10,000 gulden ; and he thought that no less was due to him. In a letter of the 18th of March he tells Johanna Fahlmer :—“ The Duke has ordered me to have all my furniture secretly made, to be a gift from him to me on our return. That, however, my father need not be told of.”<sup>3</sup> His father did not relish what seemed to him an unnecessary outlay ; was by no means in love with the prospect of losing his son ; and just at this time, having to pay many debts incurred by Wolfgang, he proved inflexible.

Karl August, desiring that Goethe should be universally honoured as his intimate friend, arranged that when the latter

<sup>1</sup> Must not be timid and hesitating in her demands.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 139.—TR.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* iii. 140.—TR.



dined at court, a compliance which had been but rare, he should no longer be compelled to put up with the Marshal's table. At that table we still find him at dinner, the 10th of March, though he had already sat at the Duke's table at supper, or when away from Weimar. But on the 21st he even at dinner occupies the position of honour—in the Duchess's absence indeed.

Karl August had planned to go by Dessau, where he would visit the Prince of Dessau, with Goethe to Leipzig, but a violent attack of rheumatic fever, brought on by a headlong ride from Erfurt, laid him up; and so Goethe, with a friendly farewell from Charlotte von Stein, set off alone for Leipzig on the evening of March 24. There he saw Kätchen again, now Frau Doctor Kanne. "Mais ce n'est plus Julie," he wrote to Frau von Stein.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, Cora Schröter, now at the full unfolding of her sumptuous beauty and grace, made a powerful impression. "The Schröter is an angel," he goes on. "If God would but give me such a wife, that I could leave you in peace—yet she is not sufficiently like you." On Tuesday, the 26th of March:—"I have been with the Schröter—a noble being in her kind! Ah, if she only spent half a year in your vicinity! best of women, what would she become! Good-night! And remain to me always what you are to me now!"<sup>2</sup>

When he came back to Weimar on the 4th of April he was unpleasantly surprised by the advent of Lenz, who made an unendurable setting off to his position with the Duke. Seckendorff complains that "these gentlemen seem to increase in number day by day; Lenz is come and other Heroes are

<sup>1</sup> Goethe to Frau von Stein, March 25, 1776.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> On the 26th Goethe writes to the Duke:—"Your thrust at Oeser is now doubly painful to me, for I have found the same old, dear, good, human being, and genuine artist." *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 141.—TR.

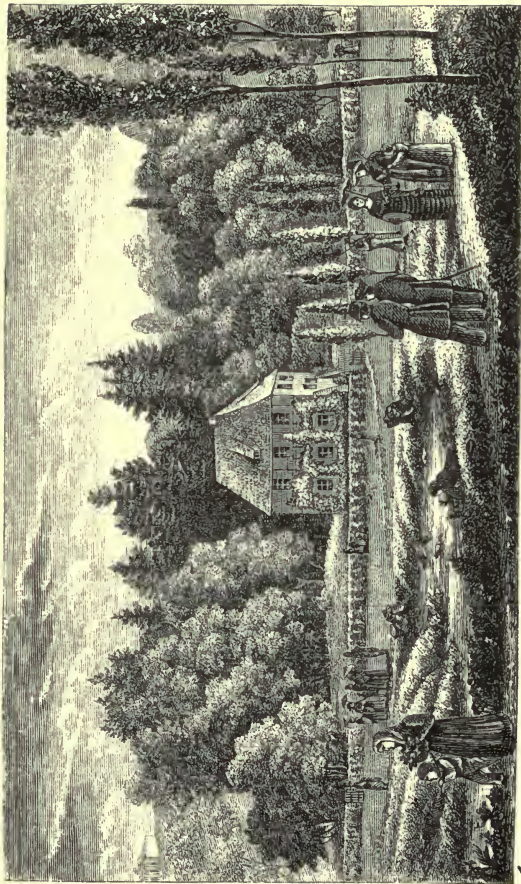
expected ; Stolberg, Herder, and Wagner, will soon put in an appearance." (Stolberg had actually accepted the appointment of Chamberlain offered to him through Goethe, the duties to be entered on in spring ; and his name had been officially registered, but he did not keep his engagement.) Lenz played all sorts of pranks for the amusement of the Court, at the expense of which his inn charges were defrayed. But he must have been an exceedingly inopportune presence for Goethe ; who has only just resolved to enter on a practical useful life, and behold this "harlequin Genius" ("*zappelndes Genie*") arrives, and all his enemies rank the two together !

In reply to some news from Tante Fahlmer he writes :— "Of Lili nothing further ; she is played out ; I have long hated that family from the bottom of my heart. *The stroke* was just the keystone needed. Devil take them ! The poor thing I pity, to be born of such a race."<sup>1</sup> We do not know what act of Lili's family so enraged him. So late as the end of February 1776 he had sent Lili a copy of his *Stella*, with eight lines addressed to her on the power of Love.<sup>2</sup>

On his return from Leipzig he had found Karl August still unwell. The recurring attacks of rheumatism and vertigo continued so long, and there was such interruption of the course of state affairs, that extreme anxiety and discord prevailed, and the Duke's favourite was made the scapegoat to a large extent. During this indisposition Goethe was the companion of the Duke's sick chamber ; to him everything was confided, with him everything talked over. A great pleasure was prepared for him by the Duke in the allotment to him of the Garden House (*Gartenhaus*) on the Ilm ; there was a pretty

<sup>1</sup> Goethe to Johanna Fahlmer [April 1776]. *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 141-2.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> "Im holden Thal, auf schneebedeckten Höhen." *Der junge Goethe*, iii. 194.—TR.



*Übermüthig sieht's nicht aus  
 Dieses stille Gartenhaus  
 Allen die darin verkehrt  
 Ward ein guter Muth bescher't  
 Goethe 1828*

FIG. 21. Goethe's *Gartenhaus*. Sketched from nature in 1827 by Otto Wagner, engraved by  
 L. Schütze, with Goethe's lines (1828) in facsimile.

garden purchased and put in good order for him, and a tiny house in it with a high shingle roof, prettily and completely though but simply furnished. Besides there was a care-taker's hut, a dog-house, and bee-house, even a perch for a wooden bird to practise shooting at. On Sunday the 21st of April Goethe took possession of the Garden,<sup>1</sup> where four days later he received Wieland, and Charlotte with the children. He made up a modest household by taking a cook, the "old Dorothee," and beside Seidel one other servant, Christof Sutor from Erfurt; a third was added only at a later time.

On the 20th of April the Duke renews his request that Fritsch will retain the first place in the Privy Council; Tabor is not coming: Fritsch knows what the Duke's intention is regarding Goethe, who is to take the last place at the Council with the title *Geheimer Legationsrath*—Privy Councillor of Legation. The first draft of the letter is preserved; an expression relating to Fritsch was changed by Goethe. On the very next day came the declaration of the old statesman—who regarded Goethe as an unprincipled misleader of the Duke, a selfish minion—that he could not sit in any *Collegium* of which Goethe was a member. Goethe himself, if he has true attachment and love for the Duke, must beg to be excused from the destined honour. The fitting reply from the Duke dates the 10th of May:—"Were Dr. Goethe a man of dubious character, there is none but would approve of your decision. But Goethe is honest; of an extraordinarily good and feeling heart. Not I alone, but men of insight [probably one was Dalberg] congratulate me on possessing this man. His brain and his genius is well known. You will yourself perceive that such a man would not endure the tedious and mechanic task of serving his way up in a provincial Board by slow

<sup>1</sup> He did not sleep there until the night of Saturday, May 18. See p. 333.—TR.

gradation. Not to use a man of genius at the spot where his pre-eminent talents can be best applied is to misuse." Fritsch's declaration that he will not sit in the same *Collegium* with Goethe is a wrong equally to Goethe and the Duke; for Fritsch must know that Goethe is the Duke's friend; that he has never done anything deserving contempt: but on the contrary deserves the love of all honest folk.

As Fritsch, however, did not yield, declaring that he could not hold Goethe just yet to be a useful member of the highest *Collegium* of the State, Karl August called in the interposition of the Duchess Amalia. The good Princess pleaded in the noblest way on Goethe's behalf, as to whom after due trial she has formed her final judgment. His morals, his religion, are those of a real good Christian; they teach him to love his neighbour, and to endeavour to make him happy, which after all is the first and chief commandment. On the 15th of May Fritsch took back his resignation. The very next day the Duke employed the younger Kalb, (whom the Duke fully trusting, designed to make *Kammerpräsident*), to write to Goethe's parents. He begs them to consent that their son, "retaining entire freedom—freedom to take leave of absence when he likes, to leave the service altogether when he likes—shall enter the Ministry as *Geheimer Legationsrath* with a salary of 1200 thalers."

This honourable appointment with such freedom secured could not but please even Rath Goethe, much as he disliked the service of princes, and disappointed as he must have felt at having to give up all his great plans for Wolfgang's future, and inhabit alone the fine house intended for two families. His son's high honours were an ill destiny for him. Meanwhile, Goethe was enjoying his first days in the little *Gartenhaus*. There in those first days Kraus painted him, sitting at the simple pinewood table.





FIG. 22. Goethe. After the painting by J. M. Kraus (1776). From the *Gedenkblätter an Goethe*.

Goethe's relation to Charlotte von Stein had all the spring remained a most difficult one, as his passion only too often flamed up, and each time he underwent temporary banishment—either by her command or his own self-denial. And then she was by no means content with what he had wrought as yet in Weimar: if after the great upsetting at Court through him he could again restore order, it would be better for his genius, she thought; but however good may be his purposes, he has as yet too much youth and too little experience. Of course, in this remark uttered to Zimmermann, and in her dreary picture of the Court, we may hear the accent of temporary depression; yet she did indeed fear that Goethe was not equal to the task before him.

The dreadful slanders of their Weimar doings, which were spread abroad by enemies, backbiters, and chattering go-betweens, had come even to Klopstock's ears; he thought he had it on credible authority that the Duke to strengthen his frame was accustomed to drink himself sick! Accordingly, to Klopstock it seemed a proof of friendship to address a solemn warning to the young poet. "The Germans have hitherto complained with justice that their princes would have nothing to do with their men of letters. The Duke of Weimar is now excepted from this reproach. But how great a justification will the other princes have who continue in the old tone of behaviour (*in dem alten Tone fortfahren*) if that shall happen to us which I fear will happen.<sup>1</sup> The Duchess is perhaps as yet able to subdue her pain, for her intelligence is very manly (*sie denkt sehr männlich*). But this pain will become grief, and can that, think you, be subdued? Louise's grief! Goethe!" Finally, Klopstock threatens that unless things improve, Stolberg shall leave Weimar soon after arriving there; he even hints that he will advise Stolberg not to keep his

<sup>1</sup> The death of the Duke through hard drinking!—TR.

promise—advise him not to come to Weimar at all.<sup>1</sup> Goethe replied admirably on the 21st of May. It has been a moment's pain to the Duke that *Klopstock* should hold him capable of such actions; Goethe himself has no answer to make, for he must confess his fault like a schoolboy, or sophistically excuse it, or defend it as an honest fellow; and perhaps a mixture of all three would in truth come out. It is quite plain from this letter that the reports had been gross exaggerations, and that he knew well his duty towards Karl August! And when he concludes:—"But let Stolberg come. We are not worse; and, please God, we are better than when he saw us," it is plain that the mad conduct which the Stolbergs' presence (November 27-December 3, 1775) had made so much madder, and in which they had taken such delight, was now tamed down, and Fritz Stolberg might come without danger. But Klopstock, spoiled by the blind reverence paid to him, trusted Goethe so little as to believe him capable of the most shameful forgetfulness of duty, and felt insulted by his frank declaration of independence; he broke off all further communication in a rude letter, forbade Stolberg to keep his engagement, and sent the little correspondence to the Markgraf of Baden as evidence of a noble deed!

In May (1776) we find Goethe occupied with the arrangement of his Garden; he slept there for the first time on the night of Saturday the 18th of May. In the Duke's company, or on the Duke's business, he now rides about the country a great deal. He takes zealous interest in the ducal amateur theatre, where the Duke himself would sometimes act. His love for Charlotte von Stein is "an enduring renunciation,"<sup>2</sup> for he foresaw himself always being banished anew from her,

<sup>1</sup> Klopstock's letter to Goethe is dated May 8.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> "Eine anhaltende Resignation:" Goethe to Frau von Stein, Thursday, May 2, 1776.—TR.

on whose confidence and sympathy depended all his peace. On one occasion he incurs severe rebuke, because his thoughtlessness is making her the theme of common talk; she even threatens to break off their intercourse entirely. And then we hear him lament :—"And so this relation, the purest, most beautiful, most true, that I have ever had to any woman but my sister, this too to be destroyed! . . . If I have not your society your love is as little aid to me as the love of my dear absent ones, in which I am so wealthy. Personal Presence in the moment of need decides all, alleviates all, strengthens all."<sup>1</sup>

The completion of the Duke's new appointments was delayed until June 11 (1776). Not until the 19th did Goethe receive the formal notification. Karl August paid him from the privy purse the salary of the half-year just closing, as he had done good service during the period. When the appointment was at length made public all Goethe's enemies were bitterly incensed. To Charlotte von Stein it seemed an expedient moment for speaking out plainly to him about his position and his love for her. He replies that she is much dearer, that her goodness toward him is become much more precious in his estimation; but also a relation over which it would be so easy and pleasant to glide [into some wrong relation], about which it would be so easy and pleasant to deceive oneself, has grown much clearer and deeper.<sup>2</sup>

In this period falls the presentation of Cumberland's *West Indian* at the ducal amateur theatre. Goethe played Belcour here too; the uncommonly beautiful and alluring Frau von Werther played with remarkable fire Belcour's sweetheart; Charlotte played the part of the young Charlotte Russport. The Duke and Seckendorff were actors also.

It was a great regret to Goethe that Frau von Stein was

<sup>1</sup> Goethe to Frau von Stein, Friday, May 24, 1776.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> Goethe to Frau von Stein, Saturday, June 22, 1776.—TR.

soon to leave for the Pyrmont Baths. "Presence it is alone which works, which comforts, builds up!"—he wrote to her on the 22d of June. "Even though it often torments—torment also is love's sunshine-rain." When he dined with her on Sunday, the 23d of June, she gave him a satirical composition (*Scherzgedicht*) of hers—three dramatic scenes—in which he figured under the Ossianic bard-name Ryno. Besides, there were Adelheide, the Duchess Mother: Thusnelde, the everyday nickname of the somewhat deformed Luise von Göchhausen, the witty companion of the Duchess Mother: Kunigunde, Frau von Werther, and Gertrud, Charlotte herself, whose lively interest in the poet of *Werther* is expressed. That he is, as we know him, serious, ay gloomy, comes out in the first scene; in the second Gertrud complains that on the track of all women he is what is called a coquette; she seems to be indifferent to him herself; in the third she remarks that the eyes of the fair carry him away, he is not master of himself, and thereby he pains many a faithful heart; but when Thusnelde boasts of the many *billets* she has from him, it turns out that all the other ladies have as many, if not more. No wonder he wrote to Frau von Stein that she has hit him hard, yet he is glad to say that he is not what she makes him out. Charlotte did not think him yet strong enough in self-control, and so did not let him see the diary which she had kept since they had been acquainted. Also she forbade him to come to her on the 25th, the day of her departure, as she feared a scene at leave-taking. He had a surprise on the 24th in the arrival of Klinger, whom he received with all cordiality, though he foresaw that his enemies would misuse the occurrence to cast contempt on himself, and on Karl August, who drew all mad geniuses unto him! On the morning of Tuesday, June 25, Charlotte left for Pyrmont. On the same day Goethe was admitted to the Privy Council and took the oath. At noon he dined at the ducal table.



## CHAPTER II.

FROM GOETHE'S APPOINTMENT ON THE COUNCIL TO THE  
SECOND SWISS JOURNEY.

JUNE 1776—SEPTEMBER 1779.

**Preliminary.**—To Goethe's personal relation with Karl August we must ascribe his decision to devote himself to the service of the little state. It was our poet's great desire to influence the young prince—whose love and trust were so completely yielded him—in development to mature manhood. Yet to live on at Weimar Court without any determinate post and function seemed to him unworthy, as with his eager and restless spirit of activity it certainly would have been impossible. But before he submitted to the yoke, he required the full assurance of his freedom, that, true to his principle—"All from love,"—he might enter on a calling so adverse to the poet in him only through love for the prince, his friend. Needful, too, was the firm conviction that Destiny had chosen this strange-seeming lot for him as the only suitable one : offering the needful counterpoise to his excitable heart : the experience of the world and of men, the basis which his imagination lacked : for his active powers a definite goal to be surely attained through earnest continuance of effort. And no happier position could the young Doctor of Laws, whom the incompatibility of his profession, and of the narrow and sluggish

circle of Frankfurt burgher life with "the breadth and swiftness of his being"<sup>1</sup> would have driven mad at last,—no happier position could he have found than that influential one of Privy-Councillor (in reality if not in name), under the young, gifted prince of a state small enough to be easily surveyed and ruled!

The more general the denial of his fitness for this position : the more vehement the demonstrations of hatred and jealousy : the more absolutely he recognised the difficulty of his task—the more was it a matter of honour and duty to put forth all his strength. So we see him devote himself straightway with so much zeal to the heterogeneous business of the Council, that he wins the good opinion of the externally rude, hard, obstinate Fritsch—in whose house the lively young *Legationsrath* is soon a welcome guest. He missed none of the Council meetings—there were generally two a week ; he read diligently all the documents bearing on matters of discussion, and tried to form a positive decision from them. He laboured hard to acquire the necessary information on various subjects ; and he felt attracted by single departments of administration. But beside the business of the Council, the Duke gave him many other commissions out of special confidence in him ; and always, if the Duke were absent or engaged, Goethe was the ready substitute.

**Section I. Goethe's Activity in Public Business, 1776-9.**—Let us now, in the first place, follow his business activity during the first three years. One of the earliest cares of the Duke was the revival of the Ilmenau mining, which had languished for many years. Already, when at Ilmenau for

<sup>1</sup> See Goethe's letter to his mother, August 11, 1781 :—"Das Unverhältniss des engen und langsam bewegten bürgerlichen Kreyses zu der Weite und Geschwindigkeit meines Wesens hätte mich rasend gemacht."  
—TR.

the first time, in the beginning of May 1776, Goethe had collected manifold information on the subject ; had visited the mine and the foundry ; had viewed with regret the old furnaces ; and he did not rest until the Duke brought in the question of working the mines again. As an expert on whose counsel to rely, the Vice-Director of Mines, von Trebra of Marienberg was invited to Weimar : we find him there by the 11th of June. The Commissioners appointed to examine the matter—Goethe, Kalb, and *Hofrath* Johann Ludwig Eckard, opened their sittings on the 13th of July. Five days later they went with the Duke to Ilmenau to see things with close personal observation. On the 20th, Goethe went with Karl August down the still open *Treuefriedrich* Shaft. The Commission declared for re-opening the mines, and sketched in detail a plan of how to go about it. This declaration was signed on the evening of the 20th of July. As Trebra stayed on until the 2d of August, Goethe had opportunity to get information on many points. On August 4 he is occupied with the Henneberg Mining Regulations, for Ilmenau belonged to the county of Henneberg. Johann Gottfried Schreiber, whom Trebra had brought from Marienberg, was introduced as Juror (*Geschworne*) at the Kammerberg coal-mine at Ilmenau. And Trebra persuaded Johann Karl Wilhelm Voigt, a law-student of five-and-twenty, to take up the profession of mining, as there was a prospect of an appointment for him in Ilmenau, and assistance from the Duke was promised to enable him to study in Freiberg and on mineralogical tours.

Goethe was also appointed on the Commission of Building. Thus he directed the putting to rights of the parsonage to receive Herder. In the following year (1777) it is his business to look after the new official location of *Oberstallmeister* von Stein, which was to be in the so-called Saddle-

Room in the upper story of the right wing of the old stable. What remained of the burnt-down Castle was examined (March), the plan on which it should be rebuilt was talked over, the carrying it out put aside for the present.

Of matters that came before the Council, he was chiefly interested by those connected with finance—though there was nothing in which he was not interested. Now it was not all fair sailing at the council-board. Thus it came to differences with Kalb, who did not on the whole justify the Duke's great hopes of him. In the negotiations with the Estates of Weimar at Weimar town, in July 1777, and with the Estates of Eisenach at Eisenach town, in September 1777, Goethe was very much employed. The most favourable testimony as to Goethe's business activity is given by Merck, who has been his guest at the Wartburg for a week, beginning September 21, 1777; they had lived on the most confidential terms. "Goethe is all-important and all-directing," Merck says, "and every one is content with him, because he serves many and injures none. Who can resist the disinterestedness of the man?" Goethe himself, however, thanks Destiny, which has most lovingly led him to emotions and situations before unknown to him.<sup>1</sup>

One of the reasons which concurred to send him on a journey to the Harz, towards the close of November 1777, was a desire to investigate, undisturbed, the mining system there. Then he wanted to enjoy the *people*, the lower classes, simple, kindly-natured, happy in their limitation; he was tired of courtiers and men of business. And there was a young fellow at Wernigerode,<sup>2</sup> suffering from the weariness of life so

<sup>1</sup> Goethe to Frau von Stein, Friday, November 7, 1777. Compare the entry in Goethe's *Tagebuch*, prefixed to the month of November 1777, an entry dated November 14. Keil, Goethe's *Tagebuch*, p. 130.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> Plessing.—TR.

common then, who had written to Goethe, and the latter wished, without revealing his name, to try whether he could not do something towards a cure. One result of this journey was that his belief in the destiny which led him so wondrously was strengthened, since it crowned this adventurous journey with complete success. And what seemed to every one impossible he performed; in the middle of winter he got to the summit of the Brocken (Dec. 10); in the evening, after the ascent, he went to the door; above the dark pines rose the Brocken, white, moonlight-bathed; and he recalled how that day with joyful tears he had offered his warm tribute of gratitude to the Eternal Love which governs all life in its own marvellous way.<sup>1</sup>

In the beginning of the year following (1778), the laying out of the Park in the so-called Star, after the fashion of the Wörlitz Park, was begun earlier than he had purposed, in consequence of a sad occurrence. A Fräulein von Lassberg had been driven by unhappy love to seek death in the Ilm waters, not far from the poet's Garden. That one might henceforth be able to view in the deepest seclusion the last places that her feet had trodden, and the spot where she had died, Goethe himself, with the court gardener, hollowed out a great piece of the rock.<sup>2</sup> Thus was begun the work which went on during the spring and summer of 1778, under his zealous and skilful direction. Another such work was occa-

<sup>1</sup> Goethe to Frau von Stein, December 11. See also the *Tagebuch*, p. 138. This journey of 1777 is *Die Harzreise im Winter*.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> Fräulein von Lassberg drowned herself on Jan. 16th. Her body was found on the 17th, and brought to Frau von Stein's house; Goethe and Karl August were on the ice when the body was found. See Goethe to Frau von Stein, January 19, and Goethe's *Tagebuch*, January 17, 18, 1778. (The ballad *Der Fischer*, written about this time, expresses the glittering weird allurement of the dark water, described in that letter to Charlotte.)—TR.



sioned by the festival with which he sought to give the Duchess Luise pleasure on her Name Day, July 9, 1778. That the rain just before had flooded the whole meadow was not enough to stop him; with quick decision he prepared a spot which lay somewhat higher for the festival, and built there a Hermitage, in which the Duchess and her train were to be received by a train of monks, with a poem of greeting composed by Seckendorff and himself, and then to be entertained there.<sup>1</sup> Starting from this point, all the paths constructed at a later period on the declivity towards Oberweimar were laid down. To the Duke, the Hermitage became so dear a spot that he followed out his humour by having his "*Kloster*" suitably fitted up for sleeping in.

On the 1st of October 1778 Goethe, at the Duke's wish, undertook the management of the theatre, for which he received advances, which he then kept the account of. He, too, was to sketch a plan for the rebuilding of what had hitherto been the *Hauptmann* Assembly Room as the Ducal Theatre of Weimar. He made many sketches, with the design of forming a model on some of them at last.

As the Duchess would be a mother about the beginning of the New Year (1779), some alterations in the *Fürstenhaus* were needed, and at the same time a great deal in the hastily run up building had to be renewed; it was a regret to Goethe that with all pains no very good job could be made of it. The more pressingly needful was it, therefore, that the old Castle should be rebuilt; already the clearing of the ruins had begun. The question, What quarries of the Ettersberg should supply the stone? was considered by Goethe. To gain insight he read in Blondel's great work, *Cours de l'Architecture*; from which, in December 1778, when the weather and various

<sup>1</sup> See Goethe's *Biographische Einzelheiten* for an account of this *Louisenfest*, and for a reprint of Seckendorff's "*Dramolet*."—TR.

annoyances made him unfit for anything else, he began to make architectural sketches.

Alas ! he saw more and more how much frivolousness and stupidity there was in the Ministry. A mean vote from *Kammerpräsident* Kalb, on a question about the mines, roused his contempt and anger.<sup>1</sup> And he was extremely ill-pleased with Fritsch, too, because of many occurrences which seemed to warrant an unfavourable view of that statesman's honour. At length Goethe spoke his mind on the subject to the Duke. And he repeatedly declared against the harsh flogging to which *Rittmeister* von Lichtenberg, a great favourite of Karl August, subjected the soldiers. The shameful negligence in the War Department, of which Fritsch was head, roused Goethe's anger, and his repeated representations at length caused Fritsch to request the Duke to relieve him of the office, which then passed to Goethe, January 1779. Goethe underwent the new burthen of duty with the conscientiousness which accompanied all his action, without claiming any extra salary ; he even defrayed from his own pocket the expenses of the official journeys entailed. Heavy as this addition to his burdens fell on him, he drew courage from the conviction "By tranquillity and dexterity all will yet be overcome" ("*Durch Ruhe und Gewandtheit geht doch alles durch.*"<sup>2</sup>) His strict parcelling out of time, his keen sense of duty, and his power of rapid observation and rapid acquirement, made him able to master such a number of unfamiliar labours—which were indeed more burdensome to him with his almost self-torturing conscientiousness, than they would be to mere men of business.

On the 5th of January 1779 the War Department was offered to his care, and accordingly his thoughts are, for the present, altogether bent on military economics ; he "bathes"

<sup>1</sup> Goethe's *Tagebuch*, p. 170, December 15, 1778.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> Goethe's *Tagebuch*, p. 171, December 15, 1778.—TR.

in labour, he writes in his *Diary* (January 13), and has good hopes of being able to endure. On the 9th he receives the officers who are now his subordinates. He "labours in silence" on his new department; it does not indeed escape him how difficult it is for his "withdrawn" spirit to hit on the right decision in these common things, yet, during the few years past he has grown much clearer in judgment and very cautious; often, indeed, too distrustful.<sup>1</sup> After the 13th, on which day he formally undertakes the discharge of the duties of his new post, he does hardly anything else for the time.

His first care was to introduce order into the confusion of the military *Repositur*. Unfortunately, just at this time, came the irruption of the Prussians into the district Grossrudestedt, to obtain recruits. The choice was, alas! merely between two evils—to resist in vain, to submit. A courier was sent to the King of Prussia, on whose decision all waited. Of Goethe's extreme distress we have evidence in the very penetrating and excellent letter which he wrote to the Duke on the subject.<sup>2</sup>

"February 1.—Council. Stupid atmosphere there. Fatal humour of Fritsch. The Duke spoke too much. . . . Dined with the Duke. Afterwards let fall some observations about speaking too much; about forgiving; moderating one's expressions; and about bringing things to discussion while in anger which should not be spoken of. Also concerning the military *Macaronis*. The Duke remains still an unmoved adherent to Form. False attribution to his position what one finds good and great in others. Bedazzlement by external whitewashing. I have fallen into just this mistake in the Building Department. I will manage the War Department well, because in

<sup>1</sup> See all this in the *Tagebuch* for January 9, 1779.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> See *Briefwechsel des Grossherzogs Carl August . . . mit Goethe 1775-1828*; Neue Ausgabe, Wien, 1873.—TR.

business I have no imagination at all ; don't want to make out that anything is which is not ; do want exact knowledge and order."<sup>1</sup> He goes on to say that he does not let the proposals of various changes, which come from many quarters, disturb his judgment, knowing how often self-interest hides in such occasions.

As the care of the War Department compelled him to travel about the country, he also undertook the Department of Public Roads, hitherto neglected like the other. In his new labours he had a great support in the somewhat rough and ready Artillery-Captain De Castrop. Weimar put but 600 soldiers in the field indeed—beside 50 hussars who attended the Duke—but there were many abuses and anomalies in the mode of levying them. Goethe tried to make the burthen less oppressive, and to practise the strictest justice ; he even thought of the possibility of lessening the number. When the young men of Weimar town, who were to serve, had been chosen on the 26th and 27th of February (1779), he set out on his first journey of soldier-levying, by Jena, in Castrop's companionship. He returned on the 12th of March, to leave on the 16th for Ilmenau, on a like errand. The poet of *Iphigenie*—with which he was just then occupied<sup>2</sup>—must have been a strange figure in his own eyes, arranging the young men according to the Method of the Rhine ; but he was conscious of his good purpose ; and amid all that was disagreeable and wearisome, he had the pleasure of becoming more closely acquainted with the People, so worthy of respect in its own way.

At length the recruits assembled, on the 15th of April.

<sup>1</sup> Goethe's *Tagebuch*, February 1, 1779.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> He began, as the *Tagebuch* informs us, to dictate *Iphigenie* on the 14th of February 1779 ; (from a letter to Charlotte von Stein we learn that he *brooded* all that day upon it).—TR.

A week later Goethe visited the University of Jena with the Duke and Herder, and they dined with the professors. This university, so important to the little state, lay constantly on his heart; and though he was not directly concerned in the administration of its affairs, his advice was always important in determining Karl August's decisions.

In May 1779 (which to Goethe's joy brought the conclusion of peace), the long premeditated change of the Assembly Room into a theatre was begun under his direction. At the same time his thoughts were occupied not only with the country and its inhabitants (especially with a plan for lightening taxes), but with the question how to turn the State Domains to better account. Merck, whom he had on a fresh visit at the end of May 1779—a visit which lasted many days<sup>1</sup>—brought him a valuable coadjutor of great experience, the Englishman George Batty; who in order to collect materials on which to base proposals of reform, travelled the country over. He was appointed Commissioner of Lands (*Landkommissarius*), with a salary of 300 thalers. During Merck's visit, Goethe was carefully thinking over schemes of diminishing taxes; of the levy of soldiers; of establishing firemen and police; and many other things indeed he had in his head. In 1779 he had brought an unfortunate man,<sup>2</sup> who had applied to him in 1778, to Ilmenau, where he may be said to have supported the poor being out of his own slender means. This man was to keep him informed on Ilmenau affairs; and thus not only was provided with a pleasant occupation, but was a material aid to Goethe in carrying out his plans.

Merck, on this occasion also, was extraordinarily pleased with Goethe's position and effectivity. Merck's presence was

<sup>1</sup> Merck left on July 13, 1779.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> Known under the (assumed) name of Kraft.—TR.



no hindrance, as we learn from Goethe's *Diary*,<sup>1</sup> only stripped off a few dry husks, and confirmed him in everything good. That this is the only man who quite understands what Goethe is doing, and how he is doing it, and that he yet sees it from a quite different standpoint, gives delightful certainty. These visits of his clear-sighted friend were to him glimpses of his good destiny.

After Merck's departure, Batty's judicious report of his excursion gave Goethe the highest satisfaction; here, indeed, was a master in his own department who did not (as Goethe once in plastic art) indulge in vague general dreaming, but went straight to the point. Agriculture seems to Goethe a very delightful occupation, because in it everything gives such exact reply (*weil hier alles so rein antwortet*); but his occupation it is not to be, as his Being (*Daseyn*), once for all, is not Simple. Only his desire is—that by degrees all that is presumptuous in him may dry away, but beautiful strength may remain sufficient to pump the genuine fountains of his life to equal height beside each other.<sup>2</sup> The report occupied him for a long time.

At a great conflagration which broke out soon after (July 25) in Apolda, where he was “all day alternately roasted and boiled,” his opinions about a fire-brigade system were confirmed—opinions which the Duke, too, began at length to entertain. “No man knows what I do,” he confides to the *Diary*, “and how many enemies I combat to produce the small result. At my striving and contest and toil, I beseech ye not to laugh, spectator gods! At least ye might smile and give me aid.” At this moment he was expecting “sharp trial perhaps within four weeks.”<sup>3</sup> It was a discord with

<sup>1</sup> July 13, 1779, the day of Merck's departure.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> See all this in Goethe's *Tagebuch*, July 14, 1779.—TR.

<sup>3</sup> See Goethe's *Tagebuch*, July 25, 1779.—TR.

Fritsch, who had sent in his resignation, which the Duke would not, in the long run, accept; though Goethe thought that it would be well if Fritsch left the Council. In order to console Goethe for not following his counsel in the matter, the Duke promoted him and his colleague Schnauss—who, during the considerable absence of Fritsch, had, with Goethe, devoted himself most zealously to the discharge of the extra work falling on their shoulders—to be Privy-Councillors. Goethe had prepared a great pleasure for the Duke in a public Exhibition for Prizes at the Drawing Academy on the Duke's birthday, September 3, 1779; the exhibition showed what a quantity of good work had been done in this institution which the Duke had founded, and over which Goethe had cared. Kraus was now formally appointed Director.

**Section II. Goethe's Work on Karl August, 1776-9.**—If we turn from Goethe's business activity to his work on Karl August, we find here likewise the noblest success to record. Nothing could be less his desire than to prompt the young Duke to many journeys,—the desire which was attributed to him by the crowd of gossip-mongers. On the 15th of August 1776 he has to expressly assure his friend Kayser in Zürich, that they are *not* going to Italy. (Kayser would seem to have offered himself as a travelling-companion; to this Goethe's exhortation to stay quiet in Zürich points; an exhortation by no means welcome to the recipient, who had probably hoped some advance through his friend's influence.<sup>1</sup>) Goethe sought to moderate the princely excess of Karl August's demands on life, the craving of his nature for the extraordinary; sought to lead him to a well-considered activity towards his country's welfare, to waken in him those interests

<sup>1</sup> For Goethe's letters to Kayser, see Burkhardt's *Goethe und der Komponist Ph. Chr. Kayser*, Leipzig, 1879. See also a good précis of the letters in the *Goethe-Jahrbuch* for 1880.—TR.

and sympathies which fecundate the mind and withdraw one from idle and shallow conversation. He did not indeed succeed in restraining the Duke entirely from crack-brained behaviour; he himself, as we know, plunged into the wild student-like life of the early days of their friendship, especially when they were at Ilmenau, or hard by at Stützerbach, which had become a shaking of the head through their extravagances; but these were mere outbursts in enjoying free nature of his hot-blooded spirit of youth, so long reined in to sadness and gravity. And even here probably Goethe was not lacking in admonitions, such as we find in a letter written before his appointment, where it is represented to the Duke, that through being too hot and headlong he often wastes his own strength and the strength of his servants to unjustifiable or unnecessary purposes.<sup>1</sup> To the older friend's intense joy, he saw that Karl August's confidence in him was constantly increasing and developing ever purer and clearer (*sich immer reiner entwickele*). "The Duke and I grow daily dearer to each other, daily are more entirely of accord; he is happier (*ihm wird's wohler*), and is a being whose like is nowhere to be found," writes Goethe to Merck, October 22, 1776.

One chief longing of Goethe was to restore a loving understanding between the Duke and Duchess;<sup>2</sup> it was first needful that he himself should gain the trust of Luise, who long stood aloof from him. But the high opinion of him which her brother the Hereditary Prince of Darmstadt formed in September 1776 began to work a change in the Duchess's feeling; and so we find her drawing nearer to him—as when, November 1776, she asks him to lend her his play *Die Geschwister*, and to see after skates for her. For her next birthday (January

<sup>1</sup> Goethe to Karl August [May 4, 1776].—TR.

<sup>2</sup> Goethe writes to Lavater, so early as Sept. 16, 1776:—"Concerning Carl and Luise be at peace."—*Der junge Goethe*, iii. 144.—TR.

30, 1777) he provided an excellent performance of his *Lila*—a little piece which celebrated wedded love, and pointed to the fond union of the noble and gifted pair. But the passion of the Duke for the lovely *Kammersängerin* Corona Schröter was to give Goethe trouble before that performance of *Lila*; he remonstrated earnestly with the Duke. The Duchess now grew more cheerful, took pleasure in skating, an art in which she was a mistress, and in the extremely pleasant and well-arranged fêtes on the ice, of which Goethe was the manager. In the spring of 1777 Goethe often has the Duchess with him at his Garden; he too visits her in her summer residence at Belvedere; and soon a warm friendship is established with the noble princess; a friendship through which he strives to restore the harmony between her and her husband. Frau von Stein, too, as the most intimate friend of the Duchess, co-operated in this effort.

Among the Duke's friendships Goethe tried to cherish especially those with Dalberg and the gentle, gifted, and thoroughly cultured Prince Franz of Dessau, friends from whom the most beneficial influence might be expected. In September 1777 Merck, on his eight days' visit, could see how nobly the Duke was developing. He whom unprincipled tattle had made out to be a weakling completely led astray by Goethe, has an iron will, is one of the most to be respected, the most discreet of men. Goethe's society has been full of benefit for him, and if the intimacy between master and servant goes very far, it is only because the latter is not of the nobility that objections are raised. Goethe had not indeed been able to wean the Duke from his arrogant tendency to make the natural into the extraordinary (*aus dem Natürlichen etwas Abenteuerliches zu machen*); nor, to Goethe's regret, would he renounce his princely passion for the chase; yet in these things, too, Goethe hoped that coming times would

bring good changes. In the March of 1778 the longing for war shown by Karl August caused Goethe much disquiet, but a letter of the Prince of Dessau gave welcome aid to him in his endeavours to abate the fever. When—Prussia and Austria being apparently about to fall out—the Duke resolved to go to Berlin, “the fountain of the war;”<sup>1</sup> Goethe welcomed the “master-stroke of the gods,”<sup>2</sup> for he thought nothing fitter to quench martial desire in one so intent on *effectivity* as Karl August, than a revelation of the unimportance of the individual in the iron game. Still the great reviews at Potsdam and Aken interested the Duke and Goethe himself, and they probably kindled in Karl August his delight in soldier life, if not in war. The observations which Goethe made in Berlin were equally important to him as a statesman and as poet, for he appropriated everything as materials for his growth. He was pleased with his visit to the Opera House. In Prince Heinrich and his Captain of Engineers Boulet, he found sincere admirers. He met in Berlin the Minister Zedlitz; the old Chodowiecki; the poetess of nature, Madame Karschin; the Academician Wegelin; and the old friend of Offenbach days, André, now appointed director of music here.<sup>3</sup>

When they returned to Weimar even the irritated Wieland acknowledges that he finds the Duke noble, good, honest, princelike in his whole behaviour; and pronounces the con-

<sup>1</sup> Goethe to Frau von Stein, Berlin, May 17, 1778.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> Goethe to Frau von Stein, Leipzig, May 12, 1778.—TR.

<sup>3</sup> On May 10, 1778, Goethe left Weimar at six in the morning, and came to Leipzig at half-past nine in the evening. Karl August came on the 11th to Leipzig, and asked Goethe to go with him to Berlin and Potsdam. On the 13th they set off early from Leipzig, and were in Wörlitz by three o'clock in the afternoon. On the 15th they came to Berlin by Potsdam. On the 23d they left Berlin and arrived in Wörlitz by five o'clock. They came to Dessau on the 28th, and finally arrived in Weimar, unexpected, on June 1.—TR.



viction that Goethe has led the Duke aright. Toward the close of the year, Goethe marks with deep joy that the Duke is constantly developing more and more: with him budding is accompanied by a detonation, which people always would take amiss.<sup>1</sup> Immediately after this, Karl August's passion for Corona Schröter again troubled Goethe, and he had a "radical explanation" on the whole matter with the Duke.<sup>2</sup> But Corona seems to have been wounded by the sternness of Goethe's interference; yet he had done nothing hostile to her personally; he himself felt a passion for her which he subdued. It was a great disappointment to him, in his endeavour to bring the married couple into harmony, when the Duchess gave birth—on the 3d February 1779—to a princess instead of the hoped-for heir. He tried to console Karl August, to awaken his love for his little daughter. "Only wait until the tiny human creature has grown a bit," he writes to the Duke four weeks later; "circumstances educate all of us, and let a man do what he will, them he cannot alter. Let it never lack paternal care, that at least we may keep it healthy. Until it can understand a human voice, we shall have occasion to think and talk much about it. God give us inward and outward peace, and there are yet good times in store for you and your land."<sup>3</sup> Though he was unable to celebrate as he had hoped the churching of the Duchess by the performance of *Iphigenie*—that lofty presentment of the sublime power of pure womanhood—he delighted his revered princess with it on Easter Tuesday (April 6, 1779).

In the earlier part of June Goethe writes in the *Diary*:—

<sup>1</sup> Goethe's *Tagebuch*, December 15, 1778. "Der Herzog immer sich entwickelnd und wenn sichs bey ihm aufschliesst, krachts, und das nehmen die Leute immer übel auf."—TR.

<sup>2</sup> On January 10, 1779. See Goethe's *Tagebuch* of that day.—TR.

<sup>3</sup> Goethe to Karl August: Buttstedt, March 8, 1779.—TR.

“The Duke will soon be quite over the grand crisis. I have fair hope that he will climb this rock too, and roam a while in the open plain.” We indeed soon after hear him complain of the Duke’s inexperience in estimating men;<sup>1</sup> here, too, he sought to work a change. At the beginning of August, we learn from the *Diary*, they discussed the internal government, the Court, and the Duchess. The conversation came on true knowledge of men, and Goethe pointed out why the Duke found many a thing so hard; especially exhorting him not to attempt to go into details so much. They indeed agreed as little on these matters as on the dismissal of Fritsch, to which gratitude made the Duke averse. On the other hand, he entered with all his heart into Goethe’s plan of making a secret adventurous journey to Switzerland. Goethe hoped that the contemplation of nature in her grand style, and intercourse with the pious and simple-hearted family of Lavater, would refresh and calm the prince, whom the life of Court and business was drying up, and to whom the pure feeling for nature was so little known. Goethe had as yet been able to awaken but one intellectual amateurship in him—probably through Lavater’s *Physiognomische Fragmente*. He had begun to love paintings, especially Rembrandts, and had begun to collect. The amateurship, too, would meet rich nourishment on the journey.

**Section III. Other Relations with the Court, 1776-9.**—One of Goethe’s greatest difficulties was the relation between the Duke and his brother. Prince Constantin was delicate, gentle, and full of feeling, had fine musical gifts, but suffered much from melancholy. He had not been won over completely by his brother’s favourite. Constantin’s heart was given to the portionless Caroline von Ilten, to whom his mother and Karl August were passionately opposed, and

<sup>1</sup> Goethe’s *Tagebuch*, July 30, 1779.—TR.

Goethe was with them. Goethe often went to Tiefurt, where the prince and Knebel lived, and often received visits from the prince in return, yet there was no establishing a real intimacy; he had to satisfy himself with keeping the rift from growing wider.<sup>1</sup> Goethe thought the prince "poor" as a lover,<sup>2</sup> as he was entirely absorbed in himself. Even when he had apparently given up his love, no confidence grew between the brothers. Once Goethe, dining at the Duke's table, was witness of a "painful explanation" (*leidliche Erklärung*) between them.<sup>3</sup>

With the Duchess Mother Goethe had no such difficulty in forming an alliance; for this kind-hearted, easily-friendly princess loved and esteemed him extremely: her interest in art and science; her infinite brightness and humour (by no means terrified at a spice of coarseness), made intercourse with her delightful. At her wish, he had been the agent in getting Corona Schröter appointed singer in the Court Chapel. He was always ready to contribute to her amusement, whether at Weimar or at her summer residence at Ettersburg, where so early as 1777 an open air theatre was instituted. In his own little pieces, which the Duchess loved, he often acted. Her demands on him were indeed occasionally very burdensome, as when at Ettersburg, in October 1778, he had not only to appear himself in his *Jahrmarkt* and in Molière's *Médecin malgré lui*, but to manage everything connected with the representation. Still, though the interference with his

<sup>1</sup> In Goethe's *Tagebuch* the Prince is meant by the sign of the gloomy Mars ♄; the Duke is Jupiter ♃; Charlotte von Stein is the Sun ☉; the Duchess Amalia is the Moon ♀; Wieland is Mercury ☿; the Duchess Luise is a Star \*; the Earth is perhaps Fräulein von Waldner.—DÜNTZER. Countess Werther is Venus ♀.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> "Der Prinz in seiner Verliebschaft höchst arm." Goethe's *Tagebuch*, December 15, 1778.—TR.

<sup>3</sup> Goethe's *Tagebuch*, July 14, 1779.—TR.

business and with his favourite occupations was sometimes unwelcome, it was more often a refreshing change; and it rescued him from absorption in himself and his own aims. Occasionally he reminded the Duchess Mother frankly that he was not there for mere social entertainment. In Ettersburg, in the very last days in which he indulged extravagant spirits (August 1779), there was the most humorous fooling, during which Goethe once, in a circle of merry companions, was carried away to parody the termination of Fritz Jacobi's *Woldemar*, and make the devil carry off the hero. *Woldemar* had appeared a short time before; the sentimental philosophy that exhaled from its pages disgusted Goethe. After the parody he proceeded to give the book the "exaltation of the cross,"—that is, he climbed a tree, and nailed the book to the trunk by the extremities of the covers, "as a well-deserved penalty and a startling example."

As he managed everything at the Court, even its festivals were his care; he aimed at making them of merit in point of art, and giving them deeper significance; and he knew that this would please the Duchess Luise. In the first months at Weimar, before his appointment, he had not only worked in the management of the Duke's private theatre, but had acted amid the greatest applause. In November 1776 he thought that *Die Geschwister*, a piece which sprang from his relations with Frau von Stein, as the last birth of his Muse ought not to be denied to the Court. The charming Amalia von Kotzebue and Goethe himself played the two leading parts of the play. The Duchess's first Weimar birthday (January 30, 1776) had been celebrated merely by a state dinner, a court reception, and a ball. Goethe thought he ought to honour the next one (January 30, 1777) with some important new play, and so produced in the first year *Lila* (which, it will be remembered, bore reference to the Duchess); in the second year (1778) he

mocked the sentimentality<sup>1</sup> which he had formerly sublimed to material for poetry, but which had now become the unpleasant fashion; in the third year, when the birthday could not be celebrated because the Duchess was soon to be a mother,<sup>2</sup> he created a nobler piece of art, to the spiritual elevation of all: the *Iphigenie*<sup>3</sup> of Goethe made the Ettersburg stage memorable for ever.

Though the two former pieces were but occasional, without high poetic value (except the lyric monodrama, *Proserpina*, introduced as an intermezzo in the performance of *Die Empfindsamen*), they were serviceable as practice for his dramatic talent; and as he breathed his spirit into all he wrote, they were no mere spending of the time. Yet Goethe's share in the Court festivals went farther. There were plenty of Carnival drolleries (*Possen*) and extempore compositions in verse; thus we hear of a tragi-comedy given at Shrovetide in the year 1777, *Leben und Thaten, Tod und Elysium der weiland berühmten Königin Dido von Karthago*, a piece in which he at least had a hand; and at Ettersburg, on the 5th of January 1778, we read in Goethe's *Diary*, amid "every kind of folly" a comedy was extemporised. There were theatrical representations, too, at the *Redoutes*.

**Section IV. Literary activities; personal circumstances, 1776-9.**—To his joy he observed that amid all his business and all distractions much "blithe imagination" (*fröhliche Imagination*)<sup>4</sup> was left him. "The pressure of busi-

<sup>1</sup> *Die Empfindsamen*; altered afterwards; now called *Triumph der Empfindsamkeit*.—Tr.

<sup>2</sup> Her first daughter was born on February 3, 1779. See p. 351.—Tr.

<sup>3</sup> *Iphigenie* was acted first on the 6th of April 1779; again on the 12th; and on July 12, Merck being a guest at Ettersburg, it was acted for the third time.—Tr.

<sup>4</sup> Goethe's *Tagebuch*, February 12, 1778.—Tr.



ness is very beautiful for the soul," he notes in his *Diary*, January 13, 1779, thinking of himself; "when the burthen is gone the soul's play is freer, and life is found a joyous thing. Nothing is more pitiable than the easily circumstanced man without work." He indeed confesses soon afterwards, when engaged on *Iphigenie*, that he sees that he is treating this good gift of the Heavenly Ones [Imagination] a little too cavalierly, and must be somewhat more careful of his *Talent* if he is ever to produce anything;<sup>1</sup> but how completely this was still at command is shown by his successfully finishing the play before the month had run. In the early part of 1777 had been begun *Wilhelm Meister*; the hero, the son of a rich merchant, was to be impelled by love for an actress, and by the idea of founding a National Theatre, to take to the stage, for which, as he must himself at length perceive, he has no aptitude whatever. The author, indeed, remained fast at the Second Book, as the development of another novel attracted him, which, however, came to as little result as his drama *Der Falke*, which he had projected on the lines of a tale of Boccaccio. But during the Frankfurt time, too, he had left many a thing unfinished as the impulse died, and he was so far from giving up his *Wilhelm Meister* that he zealously gathered material for it everywhere.

The praise which he lavished on Wieland's *Oberon* shows how receptive he was for genuine poetry. When the Duchess of Würtemberg expressed a wish that Goethe and Wieland should sit for the painter, *Hofrath* May, both of them thought it right to comply. Goethe sat in the forenoon and the afternoon of July 26, 1779, and Wieland did him the pleasure of reading aloud from *Oberon*, five cantos of which were finished at that date. Wieland tells Merck that he had never before seen a man take such delight in the work of another. In

<sup>1</sup> Goethe to Karl August; Buttstedt, 8th March 1779.—Tr.

May's picture can be felt, one might say, Goethe's happy mood, and the pleasant impression which the charming poem made. He writes in his *Diary* that *Oberon* will be treasured by children and by connoisseurs; Wieland is safe from imitation here. Very deep was his gladness that his friend had thus succeeded in producing a poem perfect in its kind; fulfilling all the requirements of Art; very entertaining withal.

His own fame as a poet did not trouble him; he let things be when the pirates, without hindrance from his original publishers, ped-



FIG. 23. Goethe. From a photograph of May's painting.

dled his books everywhere; the Berlin bookseller Himburg actually published *J. W. Goethens Schriften* in three volumes; a reprint of this appeared in Karlsruhe. When publishing the third edition in 1779 Himburg added a fourth volume containing, besides smaller things overlooked before, a collection of Goethe's scattered lyrical poems. Himburg, with shameless politeness, sent the poet some copies of the fourth volume, boasting of the service rendered him in collecting his poetry, and offering some Berlin porcelain as an acknowledgment of his own profit by Goethe's works. Goethe revenged himself after his manner by writing some sarcastic verses,<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The verses beginning "Lang verdorrte halb verweste Blätter

shown only to his most intimate friends, and by contemptuous silence towards one whom lust of gain had prompted to collect his trifles before he was dead.

Plastic Art, no less than Literary, had still the old charm. He drew, he painted, he etched, and especially delighted in portrait sketching. Frau von Stein, Corona Schröter, the Waldner, and old Dr. Siewers of Oberweimar, were drawn by



FIG. 24. Wieland. From the sketch by Goethe, preserved in the Ducal Library at Weimar; here reproduced for the first time.

him. He succeeded best with Wieland's likeness, drawn on the 24th of June 1776 at the Garden, better than any painter yet had drawn it, and still he would fain do it over again. "The main thing is that Goethe and *con amore* painted it," wrote Wieland to Merck. In his comprehension of paintings he gained every day fresh insight, and he meditated on all varieties of Art.

Then his business part of life led him to new, hitherto all but unthought of, kinds of knowledge; the chief being mineralogy and botany, which were to be of such importance later on. Physiognomy he now gave up almost entirely, though the third volume of the *Physiognomische Fragmente* went through his hands. For a while so interested was he in craniology that the Duke vor'ger Jahre:" See Goethe's *Briefe an Frau von Stein*, July 1779. In *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, xvi. Buch, an altered version is given.—TR.

procured six skulls for him, but his pleasure in the subject faded fast, as mountain, field, and wood engrossed him more and more.

Unfortunately nearer knowledge estranged him more and more from those of the Court and those whom he met on business; he buried himself in himself.<sup>1</sup> But he was not therefore a misanthrope; amid all that he suffered and endured he felt happier than any one he knew, in the hand of a Destiny whom he believed propitious. In melancholy moods, at times indeed, he views all his life up to the present gloomily, he laments that he has, as yet, made no way; but this reproach is true only of his youth—the time before the new life that broke in Weimar; that he had not yet ventured to review.<sup>2</sup> The calmest content speaks in the letter of August 9, 1779, which announces to his mother that the Duke and he are coming:—"I have all that a man can desire, a life in which there is daily exercise of my powers, and in which I grow daily; and at this time I come, healthy, free from passion, free from entanglement, free from dark ill-understood workings, like one of God's Beloved, half whose life is spent, who hopes from pain that is over many a good in the time to come, while sure also of a heart tested to meet the pain to come."<sup>3</sup> At this time, too, he found himself in good bodily health, partly owing to diet; he and the Duke had given up coffee altogether, he only drank half as much wine as he had before, and often in merry company took neither wine nor punch. He, like the Duke, was content

<sup>1</sup> Goethe's *Tagebuch*, October 8, 1777; February 12, 1778; January 9, 1779.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> Goethe's *Tagebuch*; the long entry of August 7, 1779.—TR.

<sup>3</sup> For letters to and from Goethe's mother, and even about her, see Robert Keil's *Frau Rath*, Leipzig, 1871. A good translation of this book has been published in the United States.—TR.

to sleep on a sheet spread over a straw mattress, with a light bed covering. He loved cold water bathing<sup>e</sup> even in winter; thus we find him in February 1779 bathing with Frau von Stein's boys. Then, too, he delighted in exercise, at first chiefly on horseback, afterwards on foot, and he did not neglect fencing and other physical accomplishments.

**Section V. Goethe and Charlotte von Stein, 1776-9.**—On the 2d of June 1778 Goethe writes to Frau von Stein:—"That you love me I believe and feel. You and the Duke are set above me (*wohnen über mir*) as the nail and cord by which frame and picture hang." Much pain had come with his deep love for Charlotte, but he *must* open his heart to her, and his trust in her had grown deeper and deeper.

We left Charlotte setting out for Pyrmont on June 25, 1776. After her return to Kochberg she delighted the yearning poet, then with the Duke at Ilmenau, by announcing that she would stop a night there on her journey from Kochberg to Weimar. This she did in the first week of August 1776. Goethe conducted her on the 6th to his favourite spot in the Hermannstein Cave, where, holding her hand, he traced an S. in the dust (after she had gone he came there again and chiselled the same letter in the rock for a memorial); he accompanied her part of the way to Weimar. Alas! this day did not calm him as Charlotte had hoped it would. When back in Weimar he was so restless, so passionate, that she forbade his visit on his birthday (August 28, 1776), fearing an outbreak, nor did she delight him with a birthday present. Though, during the days immediately following, he was able to preserve his self-control in her presence, he draws an earnest exhortation from her on the 1st of September; he replies fretfully that if matters go on thus they will become living shadows. When, within the next ten days, she goes to Kochberg she forbids him to visit her there, while she gets Lenz to come to give her lessons



in English. That this "distracted soul" ("*zerstörte Seele*"<sup>1</sup>) should be honoured by intercourse with her awakened his bitterest envy; yet she did not fail to send little messages and letters, in which is expressed the conviction that he will never learn to control himself in her presence. During her absence his greatest pleasure was to draw for her, but so deep was his pain at being forbidden to come to Kochberg that he never forgot it. She came to Weimar for a short stay on the 5th of October, and she had to reproach him for fresh indiscretion. "For some time back you have come before me like the Madonna, who is going to heaven," he wrote with deep yearning; "in vain he who is left behind stretches out his arms to her; in vain his tearful gaze of farewell longs to meet hers once more; she is absorbed alone in the glory around her; is filled alone with longing for the crown that hovers above her head."<sup>2</sup>

In reality, Charlotte was intensely affected by his lament, at the same time was full of anxious doubt whether her wifely duty did not demand that she should entirely break with him.<sup>3</sup> However, she felt strong enough to keep her faith to her husband intact; and she recognised it as her mission to keep the great poet true at the same time to her and to virtue, by determining him to renunciation, to a pure love of soul for soul.

After her final return to Weimar (October 31), he showed

<sup>1</sup> Goethe to Frau von Stein, Tuesday, September 10, 1776.—Tr.

<sup>2</sup> Goethe to Frau von Stein, October 7, 1776. In the *Diary* for that day Goethe writes:—"After dinner the Stein; gloom!" She went back to Kochberg on the 8th.—Tr.

<sup>3</sup> On the back of the letter of Goethe last quoted, the following remarkable lines are written in pencil in Charlotte von Stein's hand:—

"Ob's Unrecht ist was ich empfinde,  
Und ob ich büßen muss die mir so liebe Sünde,  
Will mein Gewissen mir nicht sagen;  
Vernicht' es, Himmel du, wenn mich's je könnt' anklagen."—Tr.

such self-control and calm that she ventures, November 7 (1776), the first anniversary of his arrival in Weimar, to show him the diary which she had kept since they were acquainted. He had already pronounced his renunciation in poetic wise in *Die Geschwister*—acted November 21. On the evening of the 16th, after trying the piece over with Amalia Kotzebue, he goes to see Corona Schröter, just arrived; as the agent in bringing her to Weimar, he had carefully looked to the preparations for her accommodation. On the evening of November 18, he made a waxen model for a sleigh which he intended for Charlotte; and he gives orders next morning for its manufacture. In the afternoon of the same day (the 19th) “disquiet has him again by every hair,”<sup>1</sup> so that he has to get a horse and ride out. This disquiet was the stirring of his love for Charlotte; the arrival of even lovely Corona Schröter was powerless to make him forget Charlotte. Next day found him in the same condition, and he grew calmer only on the 21st, after the performance of *Die Geschwister*. A few days later, Lenz read out a comic poem, which made mocking reference to Charlotte von Stein in her relation with the poet, and to the Duchess Amalia. “Lenz’s donkeyism” (“*Lenzens Eselei*”) is noted in Goethe’s *Diary* under November 26. One need only remember with what care Charlotte had been striving to escape becoming the theme of vulgar tongues, to understand how deeply incensed Goethe was at this desecrating act of the crack-brained fellow, who had received such generous treatment. There was no appeal; go he must who had pained the noblest heart—the heart of the beloved. Goethe’s intense pain showed Charlotte how deep and genuine a love he cherished for her.

When he returned from the journey, in which he accom-

<sup>1</sup> From his letter to Charlotte at half-past four in the afternoon on that day.—TR.

panied the Duke to Leipzig and Dessau (December 2-21, 1776), he found the most affectionate welcome in Charlotte's house. To his great joy she gave him a keepsake, probably a ring; and he gave her a walking-stick. Unfortunately, the journey and the inclement December weather had tried his health so much that medical treatment was necessary. (It was then that he conceived the thought of putting up in his Garden a stone dedicated to Fortune.) When he visited Charlotte with birthday congratulations on Christmas morning, there was a violent scene,<sup>1</sup> which brought him to despair and embittered the close of the year for him, though he sought in every direction means to divert his thoughts from his pain. The cause of disagreement was probably the sleigh, his intended Christmas gift, which she refused with decision, because it would make her the subject of gossip. On the last day of 1776, Charlotte dines at the Duke's table, and then goes with the Court to Tiefurt. Goethe dines with Wieland, and then follows to Tiefurt on the unlucky sleigh, which breaks down on the journey. The *Diary* of that day closes with the words:—"Strange doings in the arbour. Feverish melancholy." Charlotte had threatened to break off with him altogether. How if she did what she threatened? He could have endured Weimar no longer then, and yet how he felt chained to the spot! Corona Schröter's beauty drew him powerfully; but she had no heart on which he could repose, no depth of intelligence or emotion to elevate or sustain.

The two years that followed were not lacking in the "sun-showers of love"—in "torment."<sup>2</sup> Still did Charlotte find it

<sup>1</sup> In Goethe's *Diary* for December 25 we read:—"To the Stein; suffered much. Dined alone. Again at the Scharchts' [Charlotte von Stein's relations]; deep, deep suffering."—TR.

<sup>2</sup> "Das Plagen ist der Sonnenregen der Liebe," wrote Goethe on June 22, 1776, to Charlotte von Stein (already quoted on p. 335).—TR.

necessary to use the well-proved remedy of banishment from her presence when Goethe was carried away by passion, or when she feared—and especially on important anniversaries—from his excited manner that an outburst was imminent. Nor must her tendency to gloomy reflection be forgotten; her faith in the frequent dreams that disturbed her; and her fear that no real happiness is ever to be her lot, that accordingly Goethe will one time be untrue to her—will not continue in the beaten way of virtue. And he frequently found himself unwell, or ill-matched with circumstance, and his spirit would grow very dark and mournful; so that even in her presence he was moody and impatient, that she at times could not help doubting his love. In March 1777 she was poorly, and he was much with her: he sketched her picture. On the whole, they were happy in the consciousness of their true love, and of the entire worthiness of each other. In the evenings he “rests in her eyes,” as he says,<sup>1</sup> from many a weariness, from all the burden and painfulness of the day. Charlotte’s love was the thread—so he puts it—by which all his other “little passions, pastimes, and flirtations hung.”<sup>2</sup> In the last quotation we are reminded of a remarkable characteristic of Goethe; that he always needed a number of feminine hearts, of more or less personal interest to him, in which to mirror himself. We have already heard of the witty and keen Fraülein von Göchhausen, of the loveable Amalia Kotzebue, and of the charming and intellectual Frau von Werther. Of nearer intimacy was the Maid of Honour to the Duchess Luise, Adelaide von Waldner-Freundstein, whose pleasant sociable nature, though wanting in depth, attracted him, and made him a frequent visitor to Belvedere; but later on she seemed to him to grow constantly

<sup>1</sup> Goethe to Charlotte von Stein, between the dates April 21 and April 27, 1777.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> Goethe to Charlotte von Stein, June 12, 1777.—TR.

more coquettish. Then he had a high estimate of Charlotte von Stein's sister-in-law, Fräulein von Stein, Maid of Honour to the Duchess Amalia. She was deep and serious, but very reserved.

These and the other ladies of the Court were far outshone in beauty, dignity, and artistic feeling by Corona Schröter.



FIG. 25. Corona Schröter. From a photograph of Anton Graff's painting.

He became aware of a passion for her stealing upon him—a passion strong enough to disquiet and excite, yet he overcame it; and the more easily since she was anything but disposed to meet any advances from him, and since the Duke himself fell passionately in love with her—for if Goethe was to move the Duke to self-control, he must begin by mastering himself!



So, too, he felt a barrier between himself and Caroline von Ilten—though she liked him, and showed it—because he had had to oppose her union with Prince Constantin.

In March 1777 he is delighted at being commissioned to look after the official residence of Charlotte von Stein's husband. A few months later Charlotte and Goethe were brought nearer by mutual sympathy in each other's sorrows. His sister Cornelia died June 8; he knew it June 16.<sup>1</sup> In Charlotte he found comfort; and he soon after was able to assuage her deep grief at the death of one of her friends. In the following year (1778) the family relation between the Steins and Goethe grows. He dines every Sunday at Charlotte's table, and during the week he occasionally has dishes brought across from her house in a vessel, on which he had got Kraus to put the motto "All from Love;" occasionally, too, he sends some eatable to her. He takes the most loving interest in her children, especially in her favourite the four-year-old Fritz. She shows herself more freely out of doors in his company, even goes walking with him in the evenings; yet he troubles his happiness by jealousy at times, though we have come just to the point at which Corona had grown more important to himself. Charlotte's elder brother brought her in the spring of 1778 a very dear sister-in-law, the extremely charming, fine-feeling, highly-cultivated Sophie von Bernstorff, then in her twenty-fourth year. She had lived a considerable time with her aunt, the widow of the famous Danish statesman, Bernstorff. To this aunt Charlotte wrote that it was high time that she (Charlotte) had been met by an angel; her heart had been just closing. Bearing companionship to her new sister was a large claim on her time; Goethe

<sup>1</sup> In his *Diary* the day is marked "dark, distracted day" ("*dunkler zerrissener Tag*"), and the three days that follow "sorrowing and dreaming" ("*Leiden und Träumen*").—TR.

found himself unpleasantly shut off by it, especially since he might not visit Kochberg. Charlotte's stay there this autumn (1778) was unusually long.<sup>1</sup> When she returned he was estranged from all society and very melancholy.<sup>2</sup> "She appears more and more loveable though more reserved, as do others too"—he confides to his *Diary* on the 9th of December. On the day following he writes to her :—"Love me still even through the ice crust, perchance it is with me as with frozen wine."

From this time forward their relation is deep and untroubled. At the very beginning of the year 1779 he plans how he will honour her Name Day, the 5th of July, with a table of his own invention, the separate parts of which he will look out and put together himself. There is a breach with Corona Schröter,<sup>3</sup> yet, after a considerable time, when she extends a hand of amity, he takes it with unfeigned gladness, feeling that he has not been blameless. And their relation of friendly good-will was henceforth firm and decided. Before he goes to Jena, at the end of February, to look after the levies, Charlotte gives him a waistcoat. He writes from Dornburg on Tuesday the 2d of March 1779 :—"Something more you should have been able to give me, one talisman more, for I have, indeed, things of all sorts and yet not enough." She

<sup>1</sup> She left Weimar September 8; Goethe rode to Kochberg on October 11, and rode back October 12 (*Diary*); Frau von Stein visited Weimar October 14; in a letter, dated November 21, Goethe is glad to hear that she will soon return; on December 5 was with her in Weimar (*Diary*).—TR.

<sup>2</sup> "Was frozen against all men" (*War zugefroren gegen alle Menschen*) is his entry beginning the *Diary* for December 1778. "Knebel's hypochondria," noted at the end of November, was doubtless one cause of this. Another cause was overwork.—TR.

<sup>3</sup> It will be remembered that in January 1779 Goethe had a "radical explanation" with the Duke—about Corona Schröter. See p. 351.—TR.

was his Muse as he brooded his *Iphigenie*; the calming influence of her presence during the two years past was on him as he wrote. The triumph of *Corona* acting with Goethe in this glorious play, was a source of the most genuine pleasure to Charlotte. She urged him earnestly to go on with *Egmont*; and *Wilhelm Meister*, too, interested her extremely.

As, in spite of all efforts, the table was not ready for her Name Day, he gave her instead an engraving of a Saint Cecilia. Before going to Kochberg on the 11th of August she again gave him a waistcoat, to his great delight. He visits her in Kochberg eleven days later; it is the first time, he thinks, that he has felt happy there; and he cannot even now feel quite on friendly terms with the place and its neighbourhood, for remembrance of the pain three years before, when she forbade his coming thither. To his regret a quite unexpected necessity summoned him to Weimar. On his birthday he had another gift from her.

Six days later, September 3, 1779, he tells her that he is very soon going with the Duke on "a journey he had wished and hoped for;" as to whither he had to be as secret as two years before when about to go to the Harz; even the Duchess did not know. When, on the 6th of September, he received his appointment as *Geheimerath* "the eddy of earthly affairs took hold upon him, also all kinds of thronging personal emotions (*anstossende persönliche Gefühle*)," emotions which, however, it becomes not to record.<sup>1</sup> No doubt the thought may have come to him that, notwithstanding all the good things Weimar had brought, he was still without a wife and a home, but he probably reflected, too, how far from attainable such happiness was as he stood at present;<sup>2</sup> and he

<sup>1</sup> Goethe's *Tagebuch*, September 6, 1779.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> It may be noted that some have thought—both of those who knew Goethe living, and of those who have since been familiar with the

gave thanks to Fortune who had given him such a woman as friend and confidant. When on the same day he notes a politic defect in himself, one hard to eradicate, we must think that he means the fundamental seriousness and truthfulness of his character. Immediately before departure he said yet once more farewell to Charlotte, and thanked her for the new "talisman" just sent him. "We are going to Frankfurt," he writes; "I know that you will rejoice in the joy of my old parents." He left behind with her the keys of his house and garden.

story of his life—that such happiness was by no means unattainable—that Corona Schröter, beautiful, pure, intellectual, would have been a true and loving wife—that Charlotte von Stein did Goethe and Corona grievous wrong.—Tr.

## CHAPTER III.

### THE SECOND SWISS JOURNEY—THREE YEARS OF MULTIPLYING CARES.

SEPTEMBER 1779—JUNE 1782.

ON the morning of September 12, 1779, Goethe and Karl August left Weimar. They were accompanied only by the kindly and helpful Chief Ranger (*Oberforstmeister*) von Wedel and by a few servants, one of whom was Goethe's trusty Seidel. In Kassel they looked up the great traveller Georg Forster, who was a teacher of Natural History there. Wedel, who introduced himself as *Kammerherr* von Wedel, and Goethe, who remained unnamed, called on Forster, and invited him to meet the Duke, whom they called *Oberforstmeister* von Wedel. Not until Forster questioned him did Goethe tell who he was. Goethe was serious, talked little, asked Forster about the South Sea islanders—as did the Duke too—was pleased with their simplicity, for the most part merely listened to the others' talk. Forster led the conversation on Jacobi, whom he had lately begun to know, and on *Woldemar*, mention of which must have been painful to Goethe. The Duke, as he asked many questions, but nothing foolish, pleased Forster. All the *Landgraf's* Collections, and the Weissenstein (now Wilhelmshöhe) were visited. Goethe refreshed his spirit in the picture gallery.

One of the happiest moments of his life was that in which



he led the Duke into his father's house in his native city. A meteor signalised the entrance of our travellers into Frankfurt. What a number of visitors had been there since Wolfgang had left it—Lenz, *Maler* Müller, the *Kraftapostel* Kaufmann, Wieland, and the Duchess Amalia, with the witty Fräulein von Göchhausen, and others. The maternal heart of the Frau Rath beat high when she saw her "*Hätschelhans*" so well, and in such joyous excitement lead his Duke to her; it was the fairest fulfilment of her most daring hopes; to use the words of his letter of announcement, he had brought her such a good day as none before. On the other hand, his father could not receive him with full heart. That Wolfgang far away was leading a brilliant but difficult life at the Weimar Court—that all his paternal schemes of a distinguished life together in the handsome Frankfurt house were gone to the winds, was a bitterness in his cup. "God has not willed," wrote Wolfgang with resignation to his mother when announcing his coming, "God has not willed that my father should be able to enjoy the fruits so earnestly desired, now that they are ripe; He has taken away appetite, and so be it."<sup>1</sup> Nor was his father pleased that Wolfgang's larger literary activity had now been so long suspended, though so much hostility had been aroused by it in old days. He called Wolfgang "a second Colomesius," referring to that Colomiès who earned the title: "l'auteur des petits livres."<sup>2</sup> He was silent and dull, his memory was failing, while Frau Aja "was in her old power and lovingness still."<sup>3</sup> All the old friends and acquaint-

<sup>1</sup> Goethe to his mother, August 1779.—Tr.

<sup>2</sup> Herr Düntzer kindly explains further in a letter: "Wolfgang's father desired to see works actually *published*; and, moreover, thought that his son ought to be a great writer on jurisprudence and fill shelves with stately calf-bound volumes."—Tr.

<sup>3</sup> Goethe to Charlotte von Stein, September 20, 1779.—Tr.

ances streamed into the house with the three lyres—the *casa santa* as Wieland called it—and rejoiced in their fellow-townsmen; Merck, too, came from Darmstadt. The only thing to trouble Goethe's pleasure was a letter from Jacobi, complaining of Goethe's treason to their friendship; distorting rumour had brought to Jacobi's ears the story of the ridicule of *Woldemar*. In Frankfurt as in Kassel, the Duke was *Oberforstmeister* von Wedel, but his incognito was very transparent. They pursued their journey, hoping soon to return.

From Darmstadt Merck accompanied the travellers as far as Eberstadt on his gray horse. When they were opposite Speier waiting the ferry, Goethe wrote to Charlotte (September 24), confiding that they were going to Switzerland to move about among the earth's great forms, and to bathe their spirits in the majesty of nature. It is a great joy the repeating of his life on this journey, the seeing all his old acquaintances again. In Speier they visited the cathedral and the picture gallery of the Canon Beroldingen.

At Selz Goethe left the Duke and rode to Sessenheim (evening of September 25), where he met a "thoroughly good and friendly" reception. Friederike, whom he had left "at a moment when it almost cost her her life,"—thus he writes to Charlotte—passed lightly over that to speak of the delicacy which still clung to her from an illness of that time. She behaved exquisitely, with such cordial friendliness from the instant at which he unexpectedly met her on the threshold; nor did she make the least endeavour to waken the old feeling in him, though she led him into every arbour. They talked a great deal about Lenz, who had been taken back to Riga three months before, having lost his wits; Karl August had been paying for the unfortunate fellow's keep.<sup>1</sup> Friederike said that Lenz had pretended to be in love with her, and had

<sup>1</sup> At Schlosser's house.—Tr.

sought to make her think ill of Goethe.<sup>1</sup> He had visited her again after his banishment from Weimar. Goethe found that she had all the songs he gave her safe, indeed everything from him she treasured still. Her parents were friendly; he was thought to have grown younger. They spent the evening beneath the great full moon, recalling sweet memories of eight years ago. Next morning he left with a good-bye from friendly voices, glad at heart that he could think again with tranquillity of the place of his purest youthful love, being reconciled with her whom he had wounded so.

Friederike, "who had in days gone by loved him more beautifully than was his desert, and better than others on whom he had wasted much passion and truth"<sup>2</sup>—Friederike Brion and Goethe never saw one another again. She lived on in faithful remembrance of the lover of her youth, after whom there could be no other for her. When her father died (1787) she, with her sister Sophie, opened a small shop at Rothau in the Steinthal, where her brother was pastor, and took pleasure in preparing young girls for domestic service. Gervinus has it that she spent several years (this can have been only between 1788 and 1792) in the house of a sister of Weyland, who had married the Alsatian Rosenstiel. Rosenstiel was *Jurisconsulte du Roi* at Versailles; in 1789 he followed the King to Paris, where he lived in complete privacy. That Friederike lived with the Rosenstiels is gravely doubted by the Weyland family. It is certain that when, in 1801, her brother was transferred from Rothau, Friederike went to her brother-in-law Pastor Marx, of Diersburg in Baden, and when, in 1805, Marx was transferred to Meissenheim, near Lahr, she accompanied him

<sup>1</sup> See Goethe's *Biographische Einzelheiten*.—Tr.

<sup>2</sup> Goethe to Charlotte von Stein; Emmendingen, Tuesday, 28th September 1779 (the letter from which the account of this meeting with Friederike is mainly derived).—Tr.

thither. Here she lived, universally beloved for her kindness, cordiality, and beneficence, known as "Tante" in the neighbourhood. A lady, the kindness of whose mother, dead, Friederike, while in Diersburg, sought for a time to supply, tells how, when a child, she could for a long time only imagine an angel as Tante Brion in a white garment. Friederike died on the 3d of April 1813. The First and Second Parts of *Dichtung und Wahrheit* had appeared, the Eleventh Book, which contains the chief part of the account of her and Sessenheim, was written before her death. A *Life of Goethe* must tell with deep reverence the story of his purest, truest, young love. This maid of twenty had strength to renounce the splendid youth, in her belief that she must not fetter him, yet holding him fast locked in her heart for ever—one of the most glorious of Love's patient ones. On the 19th of August 1866, a well-devised memorial was erected in Meissenheim churchyard to her who had fallen asleep so long before, and thus a debt of honour redeemed for the German People. No portrait of Friederike has been preserved, and Hornberger, in the figure on the monument, was guided only by his imagination. As we are without her picture, let a facsimile of some lines written by her hand give us a feeling of personal drawing near to the Beatrice of Goethe's life.

On Sunday, the 26th of September, Goethe rejoined the Duke; by noon they were in Strassburg. "I went to Lili," he writes to Charlotte, "and found the lovely '*Grasaffe*' playing with a baby of seven weeks, and her mother by her. Here, too, I was received with surprise and joy. Inquired after everything and looked into all corners. So I found to my delight that the good thing is right happy in her marriage. Her husband, from all that I hear, seems worthy, sensible, and industrious; he is well off; a handsome house; a respectable family; good burgher rank, etc. All that she desired, etc.

Alles folgen ihm züchtlich, o Jüngling  
Bengel, o Linder, ihr Jüngling!  
Sich bringt ihm in Linder und Linder  
Ein göttliche Jung und Linder.

Stimmung: 20 April  
1785  
Amen nützige Wünsch,  
Sich was er will,  
Sich: Linder

FACSIMILE 4. Written by Friederike Brion in the album of Jonas Böckel, a fellow-student of her brother.  
From J. Leyser's *Goethe zu Strassburg*.



He was absent. I stayed for dinner. Went afterwards with the Duke to the Cathedral; in the evening listened for an hour to Paesiello's beautiful music in *L'Infante di Zamora*. Then supped with Lili and went away in lovely moonlight."

What a different figure from Friederike is Lili—well off, happy in her married life, having found everything that she needed! Yet already disappointments had been frequent to discipline her. The loss of Goethe had cost her a struggle, lightened, indeed, by her family's misrepresentations of his character. In June 1776 she had been betrothed to a merchant of Strassburg, named Bernard, a relative of her Offenbach uncle. The shattering of Bernard's fortunes determined him to emigrate to Jamaica. When Lili was told of it the shock brought on a severe illness. She had now been married since the 25th of August 1778, to the Strassburg banker Bernhard Friedrich von Türckheim. Her nature had been deepened by misfortune and by memories of Goethe, whose influence upon her heart and mind had been very powerful. She became one of the noblest women, the best of wives and mothers. After the proclamation of the French Republic heavy blows fell on her, beneath which she showed heroic courage and endurance. In the days of her sorrow she sent a greeting to her old friend Goethe from Erlangen; later still she recommended to him a protégé of hers for whom, to his deep regret, he was unable to do anything.

Before entering Switzerland there was one other very dear and very sad spot to visit. On September 27 the travellers rode from Strassburg to Emmendingen. "Here now I am by my sister's grave; her household is like a tablet on which a beloved form used to be that now is wiped away. . . . Her children are handsome, bright, and well." Schlosser had married Johanna Fahlmer. When, in November 1777, Goethe received a letter from her announcing their betrothal, he had

replied :—"That you can be my sister makes my insupportable loss new again." And now it must have moved him strangely that she could thus have stepped into the place of the beloved dead. She spoke to him about the *Woldemar* affair; he represented his ridicule as merely playful fun, which would not have annoyed Jacobi had he been himself present. A peculiar dislike to the discussion of such a matter by letter prevented Goethe from attempting directly to pacify his old friend. His brother-in-law Schlosser he found very good; Schlosser rejoiced in his Goethe, and in the Duke for the sake of both, because he deserved to be a Duke and to possess Goethe. Two Fräuleins Gerock were at Emmendingen on a visit. Schlosser, his wife, and these ladies, accompanied our travellers as far as the *Höllenthal*.

At Mechel's house in Basel they saw excellent paintings. Their way then lay through the glorious *Münsterthal* to Biel; they visited St. Peter's Island, made famous by Rousseau's sojourn; it was the season of vintage—a great source of pleasure to our travellers, as in Baden the unusually bountiful fruit harvest had been. They reached Murten (Morat) after a difficult ride through a moss; Goethe brought away from the charnel-house part of the skull of one of the Burgundians who had fallen in the battle of 1476.

Then followed an excursion through the Bernese Oberland in the loveliest weather. Karl August displayed his tendency to attempt, without aim or necessity, dangerous and laborious feats. This determined Goethe to go neither as high nor as deep as he would otherwise.<sup>1</sup> There were other passions of the hot-blooded young Duke which gave his companion anxiety. On the other hand he had a good kind of observation, sympathy, and curiosity.<sup>2</sup> In

<sup>1</sup> Goethe to Charlotte von Stein; Thun, 14th October 1779; Abends 7.—Tr.      <sup>2</sup> Goethe to Charlotte von Stein, 14th October 1779.—Tr.

Berne<sup>1</sup> all collections and important people were visited. To the great naturalist Wytttenbach Goethe paid a three hours' visit. In Lausanne the bewitching Marchesa Branconi laid her spells on him ; Lavater, who knew the strange fortunes of



FIG. 26. The Marchesa Branconi.

Engraved by A. Weger of Leipzig : from an oil-painting.

this Venetian lady, secretly wedded to the Duke of Brunswick and ennobled by him, honoured her as one of the noblest and purest of women.

<sup>1</sup> I here give an abstract of a portion of the journey :—They arrived in Berne from Murten *first* on the 8th of October. Then followed an expedition to the Bernese Oberland by Thun, Unterseen, Lauterbrunnen, the Oberhasli Pass, Brienz, Thun again. Back to Berne on October 15, when

It was the Duke's earnest wish to travel from Geneva, through the Savoy ranges, into the Valais. There were many voices to dissuade, but the great naturalist, De Saussure, declared the enterprise as safe as at an earlier season. So they passed beneath Mount Blanc and over the glaciers into the Valais, and having traversed all its length they came through the Furka Pass at its head to the Gotthard. This time, too, Goethe repressed the longing for Italy; he saw that the Duke would not derive good from the journey thither, and it would not be prudent to remain so long away from home.<sup>1</sup>

there were visits to collections, short excursions, etc. They left Berne finally on October 18. Then by Murten, Payerne, Moudon to Lausanne. Arrival in Lausanne October 22. After an excursion to Vevay, set off by Rolle for Geneva. A side-spring to *La Vallée des Joux*, and they arrived in Geneva on the 27th of October. They left on the 3d of November—Wedel went with the horses through the Vaud into the Valais—Goethe and the Duke followed the Arve past Bonneville, Cluses, Sallanches, to Chamouni Valley; then over the Col de Balme to Martigny; then to St. Maurice *down* the Rhone to meet Wedel with the horses at Bex; then up the Rhone valley; through the Furka Pass—and Goethe was at the Gotthard for the second time! From the Gotthard down the Reuss to Luzern Lake; then a sail by Schwytz to Luzern; whence they rode to Zürich and Lavater. See Goethe's letters to Frau von Stein, and the *Briefe aus der Schweiz*.—TR.

<sup>1</sup> Goethe writes to Frau von Stein on Saturday, the 13th of November, from the Capuchins' Hospice on the Gotthard:—"At the turning-point of our journey. Until Geneva was reached we were moving farther and farther from you; since we left Geneva we have in our diagonal course remained at somewhat the same distance; and from the morrow every step will bring us nearer home. For the second time I am in this room on this summit; what my thoughts are I say not. This time, as before, I overcome the charm of Italy. That a journey thither would not now benefit the Duke, that it were not good to stay away from Weimar so long, that I shall see you soon again—all make me turn my face a second time away from the Promised Land, which I yet hope to see before I die."—TR.

Charlotte had been enjoying the admirable descriptions, the loving confessions of his letters of travel, but he had heard from her only seldom in comparison. At Zürich he received his first Weimar letter from her—the others she had written from Kochberg. She had been delighted with the writing-table, his gift, which she had found awaiting her in her Weimar home. Her fear that it was too costly was waived by Goethe's<sup>1</sup> simply pointing to the true mode of estimating its value; from the beginning of the year it had been the object of his loving anxiety; this, if friendship can be *reckoned*, seems to him the only way which God and men approve.

In Zürich<sup>2</sup> they stopped at the finely situated inn, *Zum Limmat*, and had a very good time in the society of Lavater, around whose brown table they often assembled. They saw all the "cabinets, drawings, men, and animals"<sup>3</sup> of Zürich. Intercourse with Lavater was, as Goethe had hoped, "the seal and highest point of the whole journey, and a feast at Heaven's table."<sup>4</sup> "It is to all of us a Cure to be with a man who lives and strives in the household service of Love; who finds joy in activity, and with incredible painstaking supports, nurtures, guides, and gladdens his friends."<sup>5</sup> Goethe hoped much benefit from this society for the Duke, who could not be content at home and in his family—always impelled towards something high and special. And the love for old engravings and woodcuts which Goethe had fostered in him found rich sustenance here.

<sup>1</sup> Writing from Zürich, Tuesday, 30th November 1779. —

<sup>2</sup> They arrived in Zürich about November 20; they did not leave until December 2.—TR.

<sup>3</sup> Goethe to Herr von Stein, 30th November 1779.—TR.

<sup>4</sup> Goethe to Charlotte von Stein, in a continuation, written at Zürich, of the letter already quoted, which had been begun on the Gotthard.—TR.

<sup>5</sup> Goethe to Charlotte von Stein: Zürich, November 30, 1779.—TR.



Kayser was still in Zürich. Two years ago Goethe had taken some trouble to find a publisher for the *Gesänge mit Begleitung des Klaviers*; but Kayser had fallen out with himself, his music not having produced the great effect which he had hoped: he lacked the right inward moral self-support (*Halt*). Goethe tried to inspirit his old friend to fresh effort, and already meditated writing a *Singspiel* for him, a dramatic Swiss idyll, the music of which would make Kayser a name in Weimar, where it should as soon as possible be acted, and a name in Switzerland too. From Zürich our travellers went to Schaffhausen. Lavater could not deny himself the pleasure of seeing once more those who had grown so dear, and surprised them by his arrival on the 6th of December. On that day they viewed the Rhine Falls together, and there was an earnest talk about the Sublime. "It is with Lavater as with the Falls," writes Goethe to Charlotte on the 7th; "him too when you see anew you think you have never so seen before: he is the flower of humankind—the best of the best."<sup>1</sup>

After all, the Duke could not deny himself the pleasure of visiting Courts on his return through Germany. They stayed a week in Stuttgart. Though the incognito was strictly observed, Schiller's Duke showed every attention to Karl August, and was very polite to his retinue. They were present at the annual distribution of prizes of the Military Academy (December 13). There Goethe and Karl August saw how one pupil—a red-haired youth of twenty—carried off three prizes in medicine, and did not take that for German language and literature only because the drawing of lots was against him. It was Schiller—who thus for the first time saw the poet of *Werther* and *Clavigo* in the company of his Duke.

Goethe was at the time engaged on his Swiss idyll, *Jery und Bätely*; the restored Weimar theatre should not

<sup>1</sup> They left Schaffhausen on the 8th of December.—Tr.

come short because he went travelling; on the contrary, he hoped that this *Singspiel* with its reminders of their Swiss journey—the poetic fruit, as it were, of that journey—would have a remarkable effect. He also meditated the plan of erecting in the Park at Weimar a monument to the journey which, as he writes to Lavater, a good spirit had guided, which the fairest fortune had crowned; and as he desired to have something thoroughly worthy of this first ramble alone with the Duke in the free world, he begged Lavater to get a design from the painter H. Füssli, whose last things Goethe had seen at Lavater's house in December.

Much less important than the ever-memorable and instructive stay in Stuttgart, were the days spent at the Court in Karlsruhe, where they were indeed treated politely, but the Duke met with no friendly warmth, and there was an intellectual poverty which makes Goethe write:—"God in heaven, what a paradise is Weimar!" Then they passed on to Frankfurt, whence, on the 29th of December, Goethe sends *Jery und Bätely* to Kayser, who is to compose to it rapidly, for presentation at Weimar. Then they dragged through a dull round of courts—Darmstadt, Homburg, Hanau, and Zwingenberg; five years later, Goethe could not think of this time without aching twinges in his limbs:<sup>1</sup> they were frozen; they were bored; they got wretched food and worse drink.<sup>2</sup> The Duke indeed was better off among his relations; but Goethe knew no content until he got back once more to the fleshpots of his mother. They rested a few days in Frankfurt, and strengthened themselves with good wine. Frau Aja again beamed with cheerfulness and joy, nor did her hospitable husband allow his depression to be seen.

<sup>1</sup> Goethe to Charlotte von Stein, December 8, 1784.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> Goethe to Charlotte von Stein, Homburg, January 3, 1780.—TR.

On the 14th<sup>1</sup> of January 1780, after an absence of four months, our travellers entered Weimar, and appeared the same evening at the *Redoute*. The journey had cost—including the price of the objects of art purchased—more than 8900 thalers. People had been enraged by the appointment of Goethe as *Geheimerath*, and still more by the secret journey to which the minion had allured the Duke; the longer the journey lasted, the less the information of it that leaked out, so much the more was it feared that the Duke had been perhaps entrapped into going to Italy. And thus the administration, they said, is being neglected! Others must do the work of the over-paid stranger! Enormous sums are being spent! So the blaze of wrath rose high, and was only appeased when word came that the Duke was visiting among the little Courts. Of course, when on his return the Duke was seen to have grown more contented, more tranquil, more exact, and the precise truth about his Swiss travels was known; when the new *Geheimerath*—who after all was there, and could not be got rid of—was found more free, open, and cheery, people began to reconcile themselves with the journey, at last even began to praise it as a masterstroke, now that it had come to a successful close!<sup>2</sup>

The first days after return were so engrossed by visits and

<sup>1</sup> The generally received date of their arrival is January 13. This is founded on the dating of Goethe's letters to Kraft and Charlotte von Stein: "Weimar, 13 Januar 1780." But it is well known how easily a slip about the day of the month is made in dating letters. Therefore, Herr Düntzer thinks, when Wieland mentions *Friday* as the day of the travellers' arrival, we have stronger testimony to the 14th than that above-mentioned is to the 13th. The travellers would be glad to surprise all the Court at the *Redoute* on Friday evening. There is a doubt, Herr Düntzer also thinks, about the reading of the date of the letter to Kraft, perhaps "15th" would be correct.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> Goethe's *Tagebuch*, January 17, 1780.—TR.

by various matters of business that Goethe chafed a little. One of his chief personal affairs was to get made Freemason; for that he did not belong to the Society had often on his journey hindered close acquaintance with important men. Accordingly, only three days after his return, he applied to Bode, who had now been a year in Weimar as man of business of the Countess von Bernstorff, and had zealously devoted himself to the spread of the Order of Freemasons, an order which he esteemed very high as a means of furthering true culture and humanity. Goethe was convinced that this was an honest man.<sup>1</sup> Yet four weeks passed before he wrote to the Master of the Lodge—no other than his colleague, Fritsch—petitioning for admittance; he did not conceal that he would not have written but for desire to join the Society.<sup>2</sup> The reception into the Lodge of St. John did not take place until the 23d of June.

Great exertion was now necessary in order to cope with the arrears of business which had accumulated during the journey. The finances had fallen into great disorder through Kalb's carelessness and incapacity. Goethe was sternly resolved to bring more order, clearness, and sequence into every department. But in the midst of his labours he found himself extremely wretched and feverish with influenza (close of January). Then he could not entirely renounce literary and scientific work. It was indeed a hard task to satisfy all demands, though he had long disciplined himself to pursue Art and Science as a recreation from business, and knew how to make social intercourse yield its intellectual tribute. In the period immediately following his return, he works up the letters written to Charlotte von Stein from Switzerland into a

<sup>1</sup> Goethe's *Tagebuch*, January 17, 1780.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> Goethe to Fritsch, February 13, 1780.—TR.

methodical account of travels;<sup>1</sup> he pushes on with *Wilhelm Meister*; and busies himself with a life of Bernhard the Great of Weimar, which was to present a living picture of a great ancestor of Karl August, to indicate the noble original germ of the Weimar dynasty.

Of his own special departments the most pressing at this time were the War Commission, the construction of highways, and the management of Crown Lands. In the last-named of these he had in Batty an admirable force at his disposal. All that Batty did was sure to give Goethe the most welcome instruction, was just as sure to be the best thing for bringing about the desired results. And as to the Roads he could depend on Castrop in the main. Still, it was his desire to see everything with his own eyes, to learn by personal contact with things. In the War Department, *Kriegsrath* Volgstedt was a hindrance so great that Goethe did not rest until he was shaken off.

That indisposition prevented him from taking part in the *Redoutes* of the early-closing Shrovetide of this year (1780), or in the Duchess's birthday fête. Not until the 11th of February could he resume steady work. Two days later he went with the Duke to the Gotha Court for the first time; he was well-pleased with his visit. After his return he is busy about the transformation of the theatre—busy already with the still far-off opening of it. A new piece had to be chosen for this opening. Goethe himself had none ready; for Kayser was very slow in his composition for *Jery und Bätely*. So he had to agree that Seckendorff's poor tragedy *Kallisto* (properly *Kalliste*), founded on an adaptation of one of Rowe's plays, should be chosen for this honour.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See in Goethe's Works *Briefe aus der Schweiz, Zweite Abtheilung*.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> Herr Düntzer has shown (*Archiv für die Literaturgeschichte*, vi.



On the 11th of March he goes with Batty into the district Grossrudedstedt, where everything that his right-hand man had done seemed good: the way in which the people had been dealt with good beyond improvement. On March 19, the new piece was read at Seckendorff's house, and the parts allotted; next day took place the illumination of the theatre with the candelabrum of Oeser's designing. On March 28, Goethe speaks with the architect of mistakes in the construction of the theatre, and of the way to remedy them.

For all his self-mastery and endurance in business, he feels at times oppressed. The alternation of good and bad days struck him—an established round, he believed; so too Passions, Fidelity (*Anhänglichkeit*), the impulse to do This or That, Invention, Performance (*Ausführung*), Order, as well as Cheerfulness, Gloom, Strength, Elasticity, Weakness, Self-Possession (*Gelassenheit*), Inordinate Desire (*Begier*), all followed in regular circuit, and he desires to discover in what time and sequence he thus circles around himself.<sup>1</sup>

At the end of March 1780 he is pleased to find that he seems successful in his endeavours to shake off many odious conditioning circumstances which had clung around his advance.<sup>2</sup> The matters in hand then were the behaviour of 551) that Seckendorff in *Kallisto* worked on a German translation (1770) of Rowe's play, *The Fair Penitent*.—Tr.

<sup>1</sup> Goethe's *Tagebuch*, March 26, 1780:—"Ich muss den Cirkel der sich in mir umdreht von guten und bösen Tagen näher bemerken, Leidenschaften, Anhänglichkeit, Trieb dies oder jenes zu thun. Erfindung, Ausführung, Ordnung alles wechselt, und hält einen regelmässigen Kreis. Heiterkeit, Trübe, Stärke, Elasticität, Schwäche, Gelassenheit, Begier eben so.—Da ich sehr diät lebe, wird der Gang nicht gestört und ich muss noch heraus kriegen in welcher Zeit und Ordnung ich mich um mich selbst bewege." The punctuation is Goethe's own.—Tr.

<sup>2</sup> Goethe's *Tagebuch*, March 31, 1780. Immediately after he writes:—"Nemo coronatur nisi qui certaverit ante. Sauer lass ich mir's denn doch werden."—Tr.

Volgstedt—whose dismissal was accomplished at the close of the year, and Kalb's administration of finance. On March 31 a letter from Kalb had caused Goethe "momentary agitation." On the 2d of April he is visited by Kalb; how sadly the minister has fallen stands out plain after an interview of two hours. Goethe writes in the *Diary* of that day:—"It dizzies me, the height of fortune I stand on compared with such a man. Many a time I would fain, like Polycrates, fling my dearest jewel into the sea. All that I undertake succeeds. But now to undertake also be not slack!" Soon after this the levies engaged him for four days. In the latter half of April he again feels somewhat agitated—"suffer in Prometheus wise" ("little *Prometheisch*"), he writes in the *Diary*,—yet he can say that his glance is growing surer, his skill in everyday living is increasing; only it is with him as with a bird entangled in a thread—he feels that he has wings, and cannot use them. For recreation he has recourse sometimes to history, sometimes to trifling with a new novel or drama.<sup>1</sup> A laurel wreath sent to Wieland was the indication of his warm unenvious delight in *Oberon*. Walking to Tiefurt, March 30, 1780, the conception of *Tasso* had occurred to him: the relation of the poet to the Princess attracted him; it would be a mode of expressing in poetry his own earlier passionate love for Charlotte von Stein. His drawing began to be more successful; he continued to approach precision, and to gain a more vivid feeling of the Image. "I don't draw much, but continually a little, and lately once from the nude," he writes on the 29th of March to Merck. "I seek to exercise sometimes in the rapid delineation of form, sometimes in correctness; again, I seek to habituate myself to the more various expression of attitude, partly from nature, partly from drawings, engravings, from imagination too; and thus always more

<sup>1</sup> Goethe's *Tagebuch*, during the latter half of April.—TR.

and more to work forth from vagueness and twilight." Side by side he zealously pushed on the enlargement and arrangement of his own and of the Duke's collection of paintings, engravings, and drawings, a task in which Merck gave willing help as agent. The Duke desired to have only the best in his collection. Goethe in the letter already quoted tells Merck:—"For Dürer himself, and for the collection [of Dürers] in the Duke's possession, I gain more respect every day. So soon as I find time I will set down a thought or two about the most noteworthy sheets (*Blätter*); not so much about invention and composition as about the expression and the pure gold of perfect execution."

His concernment with the mining had led him continually deeper into Mineralogy and Geology. The surveyor, Johann Gottfried Schreiber, had been brought to Ilmenau, and had made a map of the neighbourhood and of the mine. But negotiations with the Saxon Court about taking up the mining remained for the time without result. The young Voigt was a great aid to Goethe in the study of mineralogy. Buffon's *Époques de la nature*, not to him as to Forster "a hypothesis or a romance," occupied much of his attention.

The Duke improved daily, and Goethe held this ample reason for content. Only it is a necessary evil that a prince can never see things from below upwards, and often though he sees what is wrong knows not how to remedy it.<sup>1</sup> Karl August had grown very much more mature in his judgment of men and things. Not seldom they had delightful mutual explanations. Thus we read in the *Diary* of April 3, 1780:—"Got on our old ethical chargers, and had a right good tourney on them. One clears oneself and others infinitely by such conversations." His only trouble at this time was the ill-health of Charlotte von Stein. In her pure faith he found

<sup>1</sup> Goethe's *Tagebuch*, end of April 1780.—Tr.

rest, to her he came for relief every evening when the day's burden was put off. His own health was not indeed perfect ; the bad climate came against him often.

Then came a journey with the Duke to Leipzig on the 22d of April, and some days following, better than medicine. On this journey Goethe had the real pleasure of meeting the Prince of Dessau. The particular object of the Duke and Goethe was the collecting of engravings and woodcuts. Goethe writes with delight in the *Diary* that he is "gaining much territory in the earth." At the beginning of May 1780 he rode with Castrop to Erfurt, and thence on to Dietendorf to examine "bad roads, on which much has been expended, and which yet are not better nor to be made better."<sup>1</sup> Goethe and the Statthalter Dalberg talked on many matters—political, philosophical, and literary. Dalberg's narrations from a varied political life lifted Goethe's spirit "out of the simple web which I spin around myself, and which, although it has many threads, yet tends too much to fix me at length to one central point."<sup>2</sup>

As—if not in name, yet in fact—Goethe was House Minister at Weimar, it fell to him to adjust the disagreement which broke out after his return between Prince Constantin and Knebel. Knebel was extremely angry because his pupil had informed the Duke of a desire to travel to Italy, France, and England, begging that his tutor's companionship on the journey should be dispensed with. Goethe found it hard to appease his easily-angered friend, and to persuade him to take a journey to Switzerland, for which money would be advanced. It was also arranged (May 1780) that the prince's establishment should be diminished ; that he should come to live in the town in winter : the *Jägerhaus* had to be fitted up for him.

<sup>1</sup> Goethe to Charlotte von Stein : Erfurt, May 5, 1780.—Tr.

<sup>2</sup> See the letter just quoted.—Tr.

The theatre had meanwhile been finished, and after many tiresome rehearsals was opened on the 26th of May with the miserable *Kallisto*. Goethe acted with Corona Schröter. If Seckendorff and Corona had been discontented with his acting in rehearsal, because—as he writes on March 30 to Charlotte von Stein—he only “half opened the Æolus bag of the Passions,” they must now have been appeased. He played “a poor part with great diligence and with considerable success,” and, on the whole, produced the impression he had desired. “The theatre is one of the few things left in which I still have both a child’s and an artist’s delight.” Kayser’s composition to *Jery und Bätely* was unfortunately not forthcoming, and that which Seckendorff produced was a failure. Goethe could see this May go out with the feeling that he now had order in all his affairs, only he desires that full experience and ready skill may be added unto him also.<sup>1</sup>

On the 5th of June 1780 he went on a visit to Gotha Court, where he now felt among friends. Before his return Charlotte von Stein went to join her sister at Mörlach, near Nürnberg. A short time before this she had given him a ring, but had not allowed him his desire that her initials (C. v. S.) should be graved thereon; this token of her fullest confidence awaited him on his return. Her absence left a void, as he writes in the *Diary*; so had “*a love and confidence unlimited become his daily fare.*”<sup>2</sup> There was, of course, no lack of activity and diversion; but the thread that connected all things was missed. Beside the usual Council business there were the new paths to be laid out in the Park; there

<sup>1</sup> See most of the foregoing in Goethe’s *Tagebuch*, two long entries at the end of May 1780.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> “*Eine Liebe und Vertrauen ohne Grenzen ist mir zur Gewohnheit geworden.*” Goethe to Charlotte von Stein, Friday, June 30, 1780: (the sentence thus in italics.)—TR.



was the War Department, the trial of a fire-engine, and many other things to claim his attention. Voigt's mineralogical description of Weimar, Eisenach, and Jena was of great interest and satisfaction to Goethe, who had sent Voigt through the country for the purpose. For Goethe himself Voigt had collected and classified specimens of the rocks of Weimar and Jena.

Very animated was his connection with Ettersburg during this summer, where Oeser was engaged in an endeavour to bring about a more satisfactory state of things in the scene-painting. Oeser having asked for a piece to paint to, Goethe chose to carry out a plan which had long floated before him—an adaptation of the first act of *The Birds* of Aristophanes, which he dictated in a few sittings to Fräulein von Göchhausen at Ettersburg.<sup>1</sup> The Duchess Amalia had procured an electric battery, and there was great fun getting shocks from it. To Goethe's pleasure the Duke had begun to take an interest in Physics; *Hofrath* Albrecht entertained him with experiments and instruction in it for three hours every Sunday. *Jery und Bätely* was at last presented on July 12 with music by Seckendorff. The welcome return of Charlotte von Stein nine days later proved no interruption to the frequency of intercourse with Ettersburg. On the 22d, Goethe and Einsiedel won applause in a rehearsal of *Scapin und Pierrot*. Six days later there was another performance of *Jery und Bätely* in the presence of Charlotte von Stein. "Wedel played *Thomas* capitally," wrote she to Knebel, "the whole hung together very well." The rehearsal of *The Birds*, which the Duke was very eager about, engaged Goethe's time and thoughts excessively. On the 18th of August the performance came off amid great applause.

The Marchesa Branconi came to Weimar just before

<sup>1</sup> Goethe to Charlotte von Stein, June 14 and June 26, 1780.—TR.

Goethe's birthday (August 28); her marvellous loveliness moved him to wonder as before.<sup>1</sup> He spent a happy birthday with the Steins at his Garden; the birthday of the Duke (September 3) was passed quietly at Belvedere.

On the 5th of September business compelled him to Ilmenau, whence he made a very instructive excursion through the mountains. In the Hermannstein Cave he kissed the S which he had made there in August 1776, and which was "as clear as if only cut yesterday."<sup>2</sup> The Duke too came to Ilmenau, and was soon overtaken by the temper of mad frolic of former days, while Goethe felt his spirit exalted, purified. He gained during their stay light on many points of geogenesis. And he began his Romance on the Universe in letters.

On the 11th, with the Duke, Batty, and Stein, he set out from the Stützerbach, with its painful memories, on a journey of inspection through the Oberland. Batty's improvements in the meadow-land of the district gave Goethe high satisfaction. With the Duke he had "vivid and luminous conversations;"<sup>3</sup> but he saw with regret that the Duke, notwithstanding his fine judgment and the best purposes, was easily carried away by passion. Goethe did not always remember that the Duke was eight whole years younger than he.

About this time he writes to Lavater:—"The labour which is laid upon me, which grows continually both lighter and

<sup>1</sup> He writes to her—"In Ihrer Gegenwart wünscht man sich reicher an Augen, Ohren und Geist, um nur sehen und glaubwürdig und begreiflich finden zu können, dass es dem Himmel nach so viel verunglückten Versuchen auch einmal gefallen und geglückt hat, etwas Ihresgleichen zu machen."—TR.

<sup>2</sup> Goethe to Charlotte von Stein, "On the Gickelhahn," September 6, 1780.—TR.

<sup>3</sup> See Goethe to Charlotte von Stein, Ostheim, September 21 (No. 12); and then look back to his letter of September 9.—TR.

heavier, exacts my presence,—waking or dreaming; this duty becomes daily dearer to me, and in its discharge I wish to act like the greatest men, I wish in nothing to act like the merely greater. This desire—to make the Pyramid of my being, the founded basis being given to me, soar as high as can be in the air—outweighs all else, and permits hardly a momentary forgetting. I may not linger, I am already far in years, and perchance destiny will come and break me off in the middle of my building, and Babel Tower will stand unfinished, blunt. At least it shall be said,—It was a bold design! and if I live my strength, God willing, shall suffice to carry it into execution. And very powerful is the talisman of a beautiful love, such as the Stein seasons life with for me. She has by degrees succeeded to my mother, my sister, and my former loves, and a bond has formed between us as strong as are the bonds of Nature.”<sup>1</sup> Thus was he clear and firm in the consciousness of his striving, and perfectly sufficient to himself.

He went on with the Duke to Meiningen Court, where they had the most cordial reception. The Duke bought four excellent paintings; Goethe secured some beautiful drawings.<sup>2</sup> Returning by the Wartburg, he could not overcome his impatience, and left it on the second day of his stay, the 3d of October, for Kochberg. For the Duke arriving on the 9th of October, Goethe had prepared a reception humorous as it was simple in device. Clad as an honest countryman, he presented an address in doggerel verse: the good Sebastian Simpel begged the Duke to interest himself in the “true peasant blood,” which always would be his best possession, on which he may congratulate himself rather than on his horses and studs.<sup>3</sup> This was, so to speak, the moral of the journey

<sup>1</sup> Goethe to Lavater, Ostheim vor d. Rhön, September (?) 1780.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> Goethe to Merck, Weimar, October 11, 1780.—TR.

<sup>3</sup> See it reprinted Hempel's *Goethe's Werke*, Bd. iii., s. 317-18.—TR.

just over. Before this, on the 4th, Goethe had again written on the edge of Charlotte's writing-table: he is "The Same" ("*Ebenderselbe*"). But even in Karl August's presence, he allowed himself to be carried away in a mad fit of jealousy at the friendliness of Frau von Stein towards the Duke, a friendliness which she showed to all. On the following morning, as she accompanied him up the hill to the road by which he was about to travel to Weimar, she reproached him for his behaviour so earnestly that he almost broke forth in tears. Not till three days later did he receive comforting words from her; but her return on this occasion was long delayed by illness in her family, and still she did not seem appeased. (At this time, too, she was rendered anxious by fear of monetary embarrassment; her husband's many and various schemes did not turn out well.)

Notwithstanding the quantity of business which awaited Goethe on his return to Weimar, he found time for the study of mineralogy and geology. He planned to write a little essay on the relations of position of various rocks. On the 20th of October he went to meet Merck at Mühlhausen, and spent a very good day and a couple of nights there. Now for the first time he seriously dubs Merck—even before his coming—"Mephistopheles;"<sup>1</sup> and writing to Frau von Stein afterwards, he says—"The old dragon always makes me bad blood; it is with me as with Psyche when she saw her sisters again."<sup>2</sup> Goethe had indeed in jest already given him this nickname in Frankfurt, because of the mocking sharpness which made Merck like the Mephistopheles of *Faust*. Merck must have been reproaching him by letter for meddling with so many different kinds of work, and for wasting his power on so many commonplace things, and these reproaches had now prob-

<sup>1</sup> Goethe to Charlotte von Stein, October 20, 1780.

<sup>2</sup> Goethe to Charlotte von Stein, October 25, 1780.

ably been repeated in person. Ten months later, Goethe observes in a letter to his mother that Merck has eyes only for what he (Goethe) is sacrificing, no eyes to see what he is gaining—to see how daily he grows richer, while daily giving away.<sup>1</sup> Merck perhaps made him re-consider certain isolated points in his conduct of life, but did not at all shake his general conviction that the only right path for him was that which he pursued.

Merck brought him news that his father was very ill (it is said had grown weak-minded); yet at this time it was impossible for Goethe to leave Weimar. The Duke had sent a bust of himself to Rath Goethe in grateful acknowledgment of his hospitality; and without Wolfgang's knowledge had idemnified Frau Aja for the heavy expense at which that hospitality had been exercised.<sup>2</sup>

Towards the close of the month Goethe had a good deal to look after in his capacity of *Hausminister*, especially the arrangements for the new domestic establishment and the journey of Prince Constantin. Yet amid all, he found time and energy to begin *Tasso*.<sup>3</sup> Not until the 4th of November could he visit Charlotte at Kochberg in company with the Duke. There was a perfect reconciliation. For the third time he wrote his name on the edge of the writing-table. Thus he was again perfectly content; Charlotte is "the one Ideal of his soul."

When she at length came back after the anniversary of his arrival in Weimar—the 7th of November—his chief effort for the time was to push on with *Tasso*, the first scene of which he read aloud (November 10) to Charlotte and Knebel, "his best and only public." Soon the first Act is finished, and, at

<sup>1</sup> Goethe to his Mother, August 11, 1781.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> See Robert Keil's *Frau Rath*, p. 163, note.—TR.

<sup>3</sup> "Began to write *Tasso*," is an entry in the Diary between the 14th and 31st October 1780.—TR.



Charlotte's earnest desire, the second begun ; but no exhortations could avail to push this Act forward, and at the end of the month he has to lay it aside.

Towards the close of the year 1780 he became right weary of his load of business. Charlotte was his one consolation. The Court on the other hand grew colder. "Yesterday evening I grew very sad—sad from the bottom of my heart," he writes to Charlotte on the last day of 1780 ; he will tell her more when they meet. The cause of his pain was the drawing back of the Court, which was due, he felt, to his not being of the nobility.

In the New Year (1781) he found the amount of work in the War Department much increased by the dismissal of Volgstedt ; he had become the centre from which all directions must radiate. In this year he founded a spinning and knitting school for poor soldiers' children, laying out to admirable advantage the 100 thalers advanced by the State. The superintendence of this school he gave to Seidel, who set up besides a linen-spinning establishment on his own account. In all the other branches of his practical activity, Goethe laboured "*ohne Rast*." Yet he found time not only for social life—for skating especially—but time to contribute to the entertainment of others.

Friend Kayser, then in Weimar, he sought to bring under public notice in the most advantageous way, hoping for Kayser that in Weimar, besides seeing and hearing a great deal of his own art, he would grow more pliant and dexterous. Kayser had shortly before published a *Christmäs Cantata* ; Goethe subscribed for twelve copies.

The bright little *Song of the Three Kings*<sup>1</sup> was written for

<sup>1</sup> See *Epiphaniasfest* in Goethe's *Gedichte*. Corona Schröter sang the part of the First King :—"Ich Erster bin so weiss und auch so schön . . . werd ich sein Tag kein Mädchen mehr erfreun."—TR.

Twelfth Night evening, 1781, and was sung by Corona Schröter and two professional singers, to the delight of the Duchess Amalia and her guests. For the Duchess Luise's birthday (Jan. 30), in the absence of any new play, it was resolved to repeat *Iphigenie*, and Goethe, though poorly, had to act. In the first week of the year he had written a *Gespräch über die deutsche Literatur*,<sup>1</sup> moved by the unjust depreciation of German literature in the essay *De la littérature allemande*, published by Friedrich of Prussia towards the close of 1780. Then for the *Redoute* of the 2d of February, the first after the birthday of the Duchess, he had to arrange a masquerade congratulating her. On the 4th of February it was planned to have another at the next *Redoute* (Feb. 16), with Charlotte von Stein and her husband, the Prince, Knebel, and other persons of rank, as actors. If, hitherto, it had always been Charlotte von Stein who hesitated to appear in public with her friend lest the tongue of slander should be loosed, on this occasion it is Goethe whom we find so anxious, that he proposes to give up to the Prince his part of "Sleep," who was to appear leading "Night"—Charlotte—by the hand. But Charlotte's faith in the steadfastness of their pure relation was too great to admit of the least uneasiness. And so Goethe appeared in the masque *Winter*, which was presented amid the greatest applause on February 16.<sup>2</sup> But Goethe opposed

<sup>1</sup> *Dialogue on German Literature*. Goethe sent this *Dialogue* to Merck, who praises it in a letter to Georg Forster. It was not published, because Möser anticipated what it had to say in his *Schreiben über die deutsche Sprache und Literatur*. It was lost, and has not, I believe, been yet found.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> On the 15th of February 1781, the day preceding this representation, Lessing had died at Brunswick. Goethe knew of the death on the 20th; he writes to Charlotte von Stein:—"Not a quarter of an hour before the news came I had made a plan of visiting him. We lose much, much, in him, more than we believe."—TR.

the Duke's desire to have a picture of the masque taken; he did not wish so dear a remembrance to be desecrated. *Winter* was repeated on March 2. That all this time he felt very unwell he would betray to nobody, that he might "not lose his credit."<sup>1</sup>

The devotion for Charlotte had now grown to a very noble emotion, pure from baseness and distrust. Before he started with the Duke for Neuenheiligen on March 7, to visit the Countess Werther, Charlotte gives him a night-jacket. "The repose of assured love and of firm confidence" makes him happy in absence as well as in presence.<sup>2</sup> She it is who has restored his openness and calm of heart, and his friendly sympathy with life. The Duke's childishness in the modes of self-indulgence—a childishness so strangely united with good judgment and understanding—vexes Goethe.<sup>3</sup> All hope of seeing him live happily with the Duchess had now proved quite vain, and Goethe was glad that the Countess Werther was the object of his passion; a noble being whose love for the Duke was of much rarer quality than the Duke's love for her.<sup>4</sup> Their relation resembled that of Goethe and Charlotte, only the young prince was not so easily governed, and his

<sup>1</sup> So, writing on February 19, 1781, he tells Lavater. He adds:—"I hold on often with my teeth when my hands fail me . . . I take upon me almost too great a burthen, and yet I cannot do otherwise. Any man who has to do with matters of State ought to devote himself to them wholly—and there is so much that I want not to let drop."—TR.

<sup>2</sup> Goethe to Charlotte von Stein, Sunday, March 11, 1781. See the close of the letter.—TR.

<sup>3</sup> Goethe to Charlotte von Stein, Saturday, March 10, 1781.—TR.

<sup>4</sup> So Goethe tells Charlotte, writing on March 12. In the letter of March 11 the character of the Countess Werther is described in a passage which must be considered one of the most delicate and characteristic that Goethe has anywhere written. It may be compared with Dr. Newman's character of a gentleman, in the *Idea of a University*.—TR.

rapture in the tender devotion of the Countess was by no means of that deep inward kind—content in itself. He had nothing but ridicule for the submission, the self-renunciation, of Goethe's love.

Goethe, in his "*Reiseandacht*" for Charlotte, falls into the intimate "*Du*" when writing on the 12th of March. With the ribbon she had sent around his arm, he speaks his desire to grow like her in goodness, wisdom, moderation, patience:—"I pray thee on my knees, complete thy work, make me right good! Thou canst do it—not only through loving me; thy power will be infinitely enlarged if thou believest that I love thee."

On his return to Weimar his business cares were pressing as ever, yet he found leisure moments to devote to science and art, and was very happy in the pure love of Charlotte von Stein. He is, however, tormented by the weather; he was the "*Dezidirteste Barometer*."<sup>1</sup> At the close of March 1781, the meeting of a Freemasons' Lodge being at hand, he petitioned the Master of the Chair to advance him as soon as possible to the rank of Master-Mason—a promotion which he desires not only for his own sake, but for the sake of his brethren, who are often embarrassed by having to treat him as a stranger. His admission probably followed at no long interval. In the following year (1782), before the Midsummer Lodge, Goethe wrote to Kayser, a zealous Mason:—"I am a Master in the Order, that does not mean much; a kind soul let me through anterooms and chambers *extrajudicialiter*, and I know *the Incredible*."<sup>2</sup>

That happy harmony of soul in which he felt inspired to take up and continue *Tasso*,<sup>3</sup> was unpleasantly disturbed by

<sup>1</sup> Goethe to Charlotte von Stein, 28th March 1781.

<sup>2</sup> Goethe to Kayser, June 4, 1782.—TR.

<sup>3</sup> He was working on *Tasso* on the 19th April 1781, as he tells Char-

an invitation from the Duke to be the companion of a journey to Dessau, Halle, and Leipzig. Already, during the Neuenheiligen visit, had Goethe declined to go to Kassel with the Duke; now he wrote a reply, which he enclosed to Frau von Stein (April 27, 1781), writing:—"If you think well, send the letter to the Duke, speak to him, and do not spare him. I desire nothing but repose, and that he should know how he stands [with me]. And you can say I have declared to you that I will never travel with him again." Thus did matters stand; Charlotte was the mediator between Goethe and the Duke, no doubt with wise moderating influence.

In the beginning of May 1781 we find him much agitated. On May 3 he writes to Charlotte—now regularly addressed with "*Du*:"—"I am busy and dreary. These days make another of my epochs. Everything tends to fix certain conceptions firm within me, and to impel me to certain decisions." To Lavater, on May 7, he writes:—"There is an infinite purification going on in me."<sup>1</sup> From the Court he at this time held entirely aloof, and is so buried in himself—his own business and favourite pursuits—that on May 14 he remains indoors unmoved when two cannon shots signal a fire, a self-control which he had never before exercised. One of the occasions of work to him was the meeting to take place in summer at Ilmenau, of delegates from the Saxon Courts, for deliberation on the question of the conjoint conduct of the mines. With this meeting in view Goethe drew up an exhaustive memoir, in which the expenditure of the House of Weimar

lotte von Stein. On the 20th he writes to her:—"I have, even while writing at *Tasso*, adored thee."—TR.

<sup>1</sup> "And yet," he adds, "I confess frankly that God and Satan, Hell and Heaven—all which are so excellently defined by thee—dwell within. . . . Write to me often, and steal a quarter of an hour for me. My name is Legion, in doing good to me thou doest good to many."—TR.



on the mines was clearly set forth. It was a great distress to him when, about the 20th of May, Charlotte overtrod her foot—an accident which made her a sufferer for a considerable time. On the 24th of May departed Kayser, whom Goethe had wished to help in some way; but application to the Duke on his friend's behalf was impossible while their present relation continued.

With the Duke he has again, on the 1st of June, “a very weighty conversation” (*sehr sinnige Überredung*), and gains new insight into the Duke's soul :—“And the wise say, ‘Judge no man until thou hast stood in his place.’”<sup>1</sup>

About the end of May 1781 the philosopher Garve from Breslau, travelling for health, came to Weimar. He visited the Duchess Amalia, whom he found extremely polite, obliging, and approachable. “In Weimar they are more German [than in Gotha],” he writes; “the language is spoken, the literature is known above all others; each follows more freely his natural bent, even in what is remarkable; there are not so many accepted customs as at other Courts. If there is anything universal it is a certain blending of metaphysics and poetry, rather in the forms of expression of many people than in their thoughts; it is easy to see whence this peculiarity springs. There are even certain words current which one does not often hear elsewhere. And often their language is obscure, because they try to think and feel beyond their depth. Nevertheless they are very good people here.”

Goethe seems to have had Garve one evening at the *Gartenhaus* when Herder and Knebel also were present. Goethe writes to Charlotte von Stein, June 1, 1781 :—“Herder was very good; if he were oftener like this one would not desire anything more delightful.”

Any constant relation of friendship was at present impos-

<sup>1</sup> Goethe to Charlotte von Stein, June 1, 1781.—TR.

sible owing to Herder's bitterness of mood ; his wife often helped to turn that bitterness in the direction of Goethe—the fortunate, the universally sought after. Garve visited Charlotte von Stein also ; twenty years later she wishes that she had come to know him better. On June 11 Prince Constantin, accompanied by *Hofrath* Albrecht, set off on his travels, from which Goethe hoped good results ; he had had care of the preparations.

On June 25 Goethe went with the Duke to Ilmenau. The conference on the mines now took place, and closed with general unity on June 30. On the 2d of July Goethe went in pursuit of health and knowledge on a three days' journey in the mountains, accompanied by Knebel. Afterwards business detained him in Ilmenau until the 11th of July. He was very much depressed at this time ; writes on July 8 :—“An evil genius abuses my remoteness from you, paints to me the most unendurable side of my position, and counsels me to save myself by flight ; soon, however, I feel that a glance, a word from thee can scare away all these vapours.” The darkness of such moments was deepened by apprehension about Charlotte's hurt foot, and her children's coughs.

Back in Weimar on July 12, he writes :—“To-day I am invited to Court, and before going have to put my affairs in order. Thus again beneath the old yoke I traverse the familiar path. But also in good hours the familiar path again to thee.” He is much interested at this time in an endeavour to bring Kayser into personal intercourse with Gluck ; means to send 200 thalers for the journey to Vienna ; yet the letter is only written, is not sent, remains lying in his desk.

At the beginning of August 1781 he feels brighter,<sup>1</sup> and also draws nearer to the Court again, especially to the Duchess

<sup>1</sup> Goethe had ceased to write in his *Diary*, broke off on January 17, 1781. He, however, begins again on August 1 with this entry :—“I am

Amalia, who lives in Tiefurt, now that Prince Constantin has left it, and who is having the Park improved. Goethe meditates an operetta, *Die Fischerin*, for Tiefurt, but at present only gets the airs collected. He draws closer to the Duchess Luise, too ; with her next birthday in view he begins *Elpenor*.<sup>1</sup> Now, at length, he moves the Duke to apply to Gluck on Kayser's behalf.<sup>2</sup> He joins in some little hunting parties, and in the Harvest Home festival at Tiefurt on the 11th of August. In this month the Duchess Amalia founded the *Tiefurter Journal*, for private circulation in manuscript, and Goethe was one of those who promised contributions. The Duchess Amalia celebrated her poet's birthday, August 28, 1781, by a representation in *ombres chinoises* of the Birth of Minerva ; warm praise of Goethe's greatness as a poet was introduced. The usual round of duties occupied the greater part of his time,—the War Department, and the Department of Mines, the Building Department, the Park, the Theatre, the Drawing Academy, all contributed to his labours. A great deal of restoration had to be done on the *Fürstenhaus*, and the *Paradeplatz* had to be planted. He is very glad to find that he has brought the affairs of the War Department to a good footing, and he believes in his ability to manage even greater things than this.<sup>3</sup> On August 13 he arranges what sum shall be expended on the education and maintenance of the little Princess.

His letter of the 11th of August 1781 to his mother gives

sorry that I have neglected to write. This half year has been a very noteworthy one to me. From to-day I will continue." Keil, *Goethe's Tagebuch*, p. 239.—TR.

<sup>1</sup> According to Goethe's *Diary* he began this tragedy on August 11, 1781. According to the *Tag- und Jahreshefte* "the two acts of *Elpenor* were written in 1783." The statements are easily reconcileable. *Elpenor* remains a fragment.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> Goethe to Kayser, Weimar, Sept. 10, 1781.—TR.

<sup>3</sup> Goethe's *Tagebuch*, August 15, 1781.—TR.

a large and clear view of his position. His mother had been alarmed by reports, not unfounded, of his ill-health, and his letter is to calm her fears. His physical health suffices for the duties laid upon him, at least for the greater part of them. His position, notwithstanding many inconveniences, has a great deal of what is most to be desired for him; "of which the best proof is this, that I can figure to myself no other into which I would at present willingly pass." Then further on:—"You see how far I am from the hypochondriac disquietude which sets so many men at variance with their place in life; and you see that only the weightiest consideration, or quite extraordinary, unexpected occurrences, could move me to leave my post. And now that the trees that I have planted begin to increase, and there is hope of a time of ingathering when the wheat shall be sundered from the tares, how unjust to myself would it be to let some slight uneasiness move me to depart, and thus lose the shade, the fruit, the harvest for which I have laboured."<sup>1</sup> The Duke, on his own birthday, the 3d of September, gave an increase of 200 thalers per annum to the poet-minister, whose activity in his service had been so restless and so fruitful of result.

The general hope of an heir was again disappointed; the Duchess, on the 10th of September 1781, bore a dead girl infant. Karl August was more quickly consoled than the Duchess, whose grief was deep and lasting. Goethe's relation to Charlotte was now the most intimate, loving, and pure one. He had for a considerable time felt unable to address her otherwise than with "*Du*," and probably she had by this time granted him the like reciprocal token of her perfect trust, which he esteemed his crowning happiness. In this period, too, Herder and he began to draw near each other again.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This important letter has been quoted already, see pp. 337, 395.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> Goethe to Knebel, September 21, 1781.—TR.

On September 22, 1781, Goethe started for the Court of Dessau to be present at the birthday festival of the Princess of Dessau; he took Charlotte's eldest boy, Fritz, with him; they visited Leipzig Fair before their return. So cheery is his mood on this journey that he makes Anacreontic verses<sup>1</sup> for the *Tiefurter Journal*. On his return to Weimar (September 30) he finds Charlotte absent in Kochberg, and an invitation to Gotha awaiting him; he could not refuse to go.<sup>2</sup> Gotha had grown dear to him by this time. When returning to Weimar he turned aside from Erfurt to visit Charlotte (October 12), who was still in Kochberg.

The three weeks of absence had been very pleasant and profitable; yet it was with sincere pleasure that he settled down again (October 15) in the fair Ilm valley. "The thought of thy love within and this sunshine without together made me perfectly happy. . . . When I have endured the first waves of emotion which pour in upon me after such an absence I will write more to thee," are words from his letter of Monday, October 15, 1781, to Charlotte von Stein. Busy as he was he could not refuse to go, towards the end of October, to Jena, in order to perform a "labour of love" (*Liebesdienst*) for the Einsiedel family.<sup>3</sup> The Cabinet of Natural History, which owed to his sympathy that it had been considerably enlarged of late, and Loder's demonstrations on

<sup>1</sup> *Der Becher*, which see among Goethe's *Vermischte Gedichte*; *An die Heuschrecke*, now known as *An die Zikade*, see in the section called *Aus fremden Sprachen*.—Tr.

<sup>2</sup> The philosopher Grimm was at Gotha; to meet him Goethe was invited. "Acquaintance with this *ami des philosophes* will certainly make an epoch with me, as my state of mind is at present."—Tr.

<sup>3</sup> "*Liebesdienst*" is from a letter to Charlotte, October 29, 1781. The old Privy Councillor, Einsiedel, had become crazed; Goethe brought him back to his family. In a letter to Karl August, dated November 4, 1781, Goethe explains the affair.—Tr.



the bones and muscles, filled with interest any time he had to spare. For, while his researches in mineralogy were pushed on with unabating zeal, he had in addition begun the study of human anatomy and physiology. And now the Duke grows interested in the same subject, and will as soon as possible hear lectures on physiology from Loder. Having disappointed Goethe twice by putting off her return, Charlotte at length arrives on the 5th of November. On the evening of the 7th (the anniversary of his coming to Weimar), Goethe begins to deliver to the teachers and students of the Drawing Academy a series of bi-weekly lectures on the human skeleton, after each of which the hearers were expected to draw the parts treated of. The concluding lecture of the series was delivered on the 16th of January 1782. The desire for personal comfort and the need of more space for his growing collections determined him at length to rent a house in the town. He had the good fortune, in November, to obtain a house on the *Frauenplan*,<sup>1</sup> built seventy-two years before by one Helmershausen; through the garden attached there was easy access to the Steins' house. He could not enter into possession until Easter 1782. The Duchess Amalia, who had not been content to see her son's minister and friend live beneath a shingle-roof, was glad, and promised furniture for the new dwelling. She also informed him that on account of his close relation to the Court the Duke must and would raise him to the nobility. "I spoke my opinion very plainly, and did not attempt to conceal something which I will tell you too," writes Goethe to Charlotte on November 17. Nör had he probably refrained from speaking what he thought of the slighting way in which the Court had so long treated him. Towards the Court he now indeed sought to show himself pleasant and obliging at every point; on December 3, 1781,

<sup>1</sup> This is now the *Goethe-Platz*.—TR.

he arranges with Kraus for a picture on the subject, German Literature (he hoped to amuse the Duchess Amalia on Christmas Eve by expounding this picture himself, got up as a quack doctor), and at this time he was devising a ballet for the Duchess Luise's birthday; but the cold treatment which he received continued to pain him.

He does not follow the Duke direct to Eisenach and Wilhelmsthäl in the first week of December, but visits the friendly Gotha Court first, is there on St. Nicholas' Eve, and comes in for his share of the saint's gifts. "The favour accorded to me in Gotha makes a stir," he writes to Charlotte from Eisenach, December 10, 1781; "I am glad for my own sake and for the sake of the good cause. And it is fair that through a Court I should get back what through a Court I have lost. For the passive attitude which has hitherto been mine was not adequate, and the undisguised indifference of our people towards me in my retirement has also had, I can see, the inevitable effect on the public." In Eisenach he separated from everything in order to live only for himself and Charlotte. As for the Duke, he was happy and good, "only I think the game too dear; he is feeding eighty men in the wilderness and the frost, has not got a boar yet, because he will hunt in the open, which is no use; torments and wearies his own people, and entertains a couple of parasite nobles from the neighbourhood who give him no thanks for it. God knows whether he will learn that fireworks at noon are without effect. I cannot bear to be always playing the bogey [of advice and reproof], and the others he neither asks for their counsel, nor even tells what he is going to do." However, the Duke after his duke-fashion is not bad.<sup>1</sup> The misfortune is that he is not happy in his home, and so takes

<sup>1</sup> Goethe to Charlotte von Stein, December 12, 1781; "und doch bin ich nach seiner Herzoglichkeit mit ihm zufrieden."—TR.

delight in Court life. Goethe's hope of awakening the domestic sense in him had been disappointed; even the household and piety of Lavater had failed. Goethe's letters to Frau von Stein reach a very high pitch of devotion in the years 1781-2; they are at no time more remarkable than in the short absences to which he is compelled. During this little round of travel and visit he felt a sudden pain one day when he eagerly opened one of Charlotte's letters and found that she had gone back to the *Sie* and *Ihnen* of polite distance; having written a page of remonstrance, he turns, while his ink is drying, to the offending letter and strikes every *Ihnen* in it out.<sup>1</sup> Not waiting for the great hunt and the ball, he left on December 14, for Gotha, and two days later returned to Weimar and Charlotte.

With numerous duties pressing him, he had besides to compose the Birthday Ballet, *Der Geist der Jugend*, and the Quack Doctor explanation of Kraus' picture.<sup>2</sup> He played this part on Christmas at the Duchess Amalia's, to the high delight of those present. He was severe on the weak points of the latest German literature, not omitting to censure the inundation of foolishness let loose by the imitators of his own *Götz* and *Werther*. "Everywhere good fortune and expert dealing," so closes the diary of our year 1781. "Quiet and order at home. Anxiety because of the Duke's too expensive extravagances. With the Stein a calm and happy intercourse."

Whatever his feeling towards the Court, he had in the New Year 1782 to give more aid than ever as purveyor of

<sup>1</sup> Goethe to Frau von Stein, December 12, 1781.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> *Das Neueste von Plundersweilern*. In Goethe's own preface (1816) to this piece, he ascribes it to 1780. Riemer first combated this; and Herr Düntzer in his *Frauenbilder aus Goethe's Jugendzeit* settled the matter. See Goethe to Frau von Stein, December 20, 1781:—"Meine Verse zu der Zeichnung sind bald fertig."—TR.

entertainment for the *Redoutes* ; for not only the Duke but the two Duchesses asked for a masque ;<sup>1</sup> then the Birthday *Redoute* (that which immediately followed the Duchess Luise's birthday) had to be provided for,<sup>2</sup> and our poet's help was in request in many matters other than authorship. There were rehearsals of the Birthday Ballet,<sup>3</sup> and Goethe, beside a manager's troubles at these rehearsals, had to practise his own parts. Then there were two repetitions of *Das Neueste von Plundersweilern*. But he was repaid for all, when on the 8th of February, the masque *Winter* being again acted, he could appear by the side of Charlotte, almost all whose January had been spent in ill-health. Sometimes he felt bitterly the loss of precious days and hours. Thus he writes to Charlotte von Stein on the 14th of January :—"I am uneasy amid this excessive distraction, this trifling away the time ; and yet I see that it is very necessary that I should take my share in these matters. I see that one finds an opportunity of doing good while appearing but to jest."

And while thus sacrificing his private moments to provide public amusement, the most unpleasant duties were thrust upon him. On January 3, 1782, Kalb came to him and told him about the bad condition of the finances. On January 11, we read in the *Diary* :—"Dined with the Duke. Once more a radical explanation."<sup>4</sup> Eight days later (Jan. 19),

<sup>1</sup> The masque which Goethe wrote at the request of the Duchesses was *Die Vier Weltalter*, acted on February 12, 1782. See Goethe's *Tagebuch* for that day.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> On the 1st of February—the Birthday *Redoute*—was acted the masque *Die weiblichen Tugenden*, from which is preserved the song :—"Wir, die Deinen."—TR.

<sup>3</sup> *Pantomimisches Ballet untermischt mit Gesang und Gespräch*, acted January 30, 1782. Hempel's edition of Goethe's *Werke* was the first which reprinted this graceful fairy-tale ballet. It had been reprinted in Lewald's *Europa*, Band I. 1843.—TR.

<sup>4</sup> Compare p. 351.—TR.

Goethe speaks "very seriously and urgently" with the Duke about economy, and about "a number of false conceptions" that the ducal mind does not seem able to abandon—"every order has its own circle of limitation." On January 20 he reads Kalb's statement of considerations on the finance difficulty, which is brought still more unpleasantly near by Bertuch's complaints. On the 16th of February he has "a long and satisfactory conversation" with the Duke. Eight days later he consults with Kalb on various matters.<sup>1</sup> If we add the numerous current duties of office, the lectures at the Drawing Academy, Loder's demonstration of anatomy, the Court life, the visits of Dalberg and of the Gotha Court, and the ordinary social life, we shall find it hard to understand how the ailing poet, whatever the medicine of Charlotte's affection, endured his burthen. And such was the clear harmony of his spirit withal, that, at the beginning of February 1782, he plans his noble poem to the memory of simple *Theatermeister* Mieding,<sup>2</sup> whose source of happiness had been a passion for his art, in which he had possessed complete mastery, and who had performed a difficult task, like the statesman, more for delight in it than for gain. Here spoke the lofty-souled burgher whose birth was not distinguished enough for the Court, but who felt and knew that personal merit alone ennobles a man.

Shrove Tuesday over, he had some quiet weeks of steady industry. On the 14th of March 1782 he set out by Jena on his necessary round of soldier levying. He planned to complete *Mieding's Tod* on this journey, and to turn again to *Egmont*, about which Charlotte had shown herself very solicitous. He had the pleasure of a visit from the Duke at

<sup>1</sup> See Goethe's *Tagebuch* for the preceding quotations.—Tr. <sup>40</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Mieding died January 27, 1782. Karl August writing to Knebel on February 8, 1782, mentions that Goethe has begun "a garland *à sa façon* to his [Mieding's] memory."—Tr.



Dornburg (March 16), and the great delight of a meeting with Frau von Stein at Osmannstedt ; both friends showed deep and sincere interest in his poem on Mieding, with its extremely beautiful tribute of praise to Corona Schröter.<sup>1</sup>

He got back to Weimar on the 25th of March, and, after a short rest, started on the 28th for Gotha, where he spent pleasant Easter days. The inscriptions in the Park at Gotha set him thinking of the like for Weimar, in the style of the poems in the Greek Anthology. From Gotha to Eisenach, "where the Cares fall like hungry lions upon me. Had I the affairs of our Duchy of Weimar on as good a footing as my own," he continues, writing to Charlotte von Stein on the 2d April, "we might talk of good fortune. . . . The greater part of that which fell within my personal scope of power I have brought to the highest summit of success, or else can see that it will be so."

From Eisenach he rode with Batty, through the Oberland, to inspect the arrangements of his lieutenant there, then through the Thüringian Forest to Meiningen. From Meiningen he writes on the 12th of April to Charlotte :—"It is a wonderful and sublime panorama as I ride over mountain and plain ; the manner of beginning of our earth, and the story of its shaping afterwards, and how it affords sustenance to man on the outside of it—all at the same time grow plain to mental and bodily vision ; when I come back you will let me lead you after my own fashion to the summit of the rocks and show you all the kingdoms of the earth and the glory of them."

<sup>1</sup> In which occurs the well-known line :—"Als eine Blume zeigt sie sich der Welt." The final four lines of Corona's praise are :—

"Es gönnten ihr die Musen jede Gunst,  
Und die Natur erschuf in ihr die Kunst,  
So häuft sie willig jeden Reiz auf sich,  
Und selbst dein Name ziert, KORONA, Dich."—TR.

He was delighted to find that his theory agreed with the practice of Batty, who had no theory; so he tells Knebel, writing from Ilmenau on the 17th. Then comes a sad confession of the weary lot of the peasant, whose labour but procures him what is needful for sustaining life; and yet he would have enough and to spare but that in the higher ranks always more is wasted away in a day than in a day can be produced by the toilers below. In Meiningen he had a friendly welcome. The two newly-enthroned Dukes were having earth turned up and old walls thrown down, and other follies they were committing, all of which he pardoned them, remembering his own follies. "They ask me for advice and I have learned not to advise more than I see can be performed."<sup>1</sup>

Never had he, he believed, a happier time with Charlotte than the days which followed his return to Weimar on April 18, 1782.<sup>2</sup> But on the 9th of May he leaves home again, this time on a diplomatic embassy to Meiningen and Coburg. As he rode to Gotha, his first stage, he planned a poem of farewell to his Garden, which he is soon to leave just when it is most beautiful. Still he thought with real gladness of his new abode, which Charlotte would help to arrange and keep in order. From Meiningen, on Sunday, May 12, he writes:—"As ambassador, I have had a formal audience with the two Dukes, liveried servants in the hall, the Court in the ante-chamber, at the folding-doors two pages, and their Graces in the Chamber of Audience." The matter was neither important nor difficult; perhaps it was the confirming of the partnership in the Ilmenau Mines. "To-morrow I go to Coburg to play the same comedy, will also present myself at Hildburghausen Court, and will go towards the end of the week to Rudolstadt

<sup>1</sup> Goethe to Charlotte von Stein, Meiningen, 12th April 1782.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> During this period the Abbé Raynal was at Weimar. See Goethe to Knebel, Weimar, 5th May, 1782.—TR.

now that I am once under weigh, and thus clear off all debts so far as Thüringian Courts are concerned." He composed humorous verses on the haughty progress, with six horses, of a poet be-stared by people.<sup>1</sup> However, the fact remains noteworthy that the *Bürgerlicher* before he had received any certificate of nobility was recognised at Courts as an ambassador. On the 18th of May 1782 he got back to Weimar.

The oversight of the education of Charlotte's son, Fritz, now became one of Goethe's chief cares; they had a very strong objection to the boy's growing up among the pages of the Court. News of the death of Rath Goethe on the 24th cast a shadow over the last May days of 1782—the days in which the change from the *Gartenhaus* to the new home on the *Frauenplan* was being carried out; it could not but be felt that the death was a release to the old man himself—so dull and weak-witted of late—still more to Frau Aja who had been unable to leave his side. Yet Goethe must have heard the news with sharp pain, though he might not speak of it to others, for he felt deeply how little he had contributed to gladden the life now passed into the great darkness; how by his resolve to stay in Weimar he had brought to naught plans long brooded and dearly cherished of the good father who had loved him well.

The transfer to the new house was completed on June 1, 1782. To be so near Charlotte was a great delight, though he missed the sweet loneliness of the Garden. Two days later he received his certificate of nobility (*Adelsdiplom*). He writes to Charlotte, June 4 :—"Here you have the *Diplom*, that you may know at any rate what it looks like. I am so curiously fashioned that I am absolutely without reflections on the subject. How much happier for me it were, my beloved, could

<sup>1</sup> *Der Dichter im Staatswagen*, Den 15 Mai, 1782. Hempel's edition of Goethe's *Werke*, iii. 49.—TR.

I, removed from the elemental strife of politics, by your side give my mind to the sciences and arts for which I was born." But he might not before the time abandon his post of duty, where, too, he had found so much human profit; and how should he have remained in Charlotte's neighbourhood without some definite occupation there?

Even when he wrote the words above quoted he knew that an increase of his burden was at hand. Kalb was dismissed for want of faithfulness in office; he was also excluded from the position of Deputy of the Order of Knights of Jena. On June 11, 1782, the sixth anniversary of Goethe's appointment on the Council, the Duke requests that he will, so far as permitted by his other duties, take part in the sittings and deliberations of the Chamber of Finance. To avoid jealousy and to secure greater freedom, he had declined being named President of the Chamber; but it was plain to every one that he was to take Kalb's place and bring order into the financial affairs which had been so shamefully neglected. And *Regierungsrath* Voigt, who had come to Weimar in 1777, says simply, so early as July 1782:—Goethe is undertaking the direction of the *Kammer*; while the Duke himself speaks of him as his *Kammerpräsident*. This promotion, as well as his elevation to the nobility, the crowd held to be skilful chess-moves of the pushing favourite; who yet was longing to give up political life! who had been such an instance of an upright, honourable citizen, faithfully guarding the common welfare of the people, the prince, the court—conscientiously sacrificing to it his dearest wishes!

## CHAPTER IV.

FOUR YEARS OF GREAT LABOUR IN PUBLIC AFFAIRS—WIDE  
AND FRUITFUL STUDY OF NATURAL SCIENCE.

1782-1786.

**Preliminary.**—Two full years must be sacrificed, wrote Goethe on July 27, 1782, to Knebel, before the threads be so gathered together that either staying or departing may be with honour. For nothing could be less his thought than to spend his life in labour on things so foreign to his nature. But the two years grew to four; not until all was set in order—a task which so exhausted that he needed a new revivification—did he fly to the land of Art, of Nature at her loveliest.

The deeper he went into the condition of the exchequer and the whole economy of its administration, the plainer did he see how important it was that he had undergone this new burden. Notwithstanding his increase of work, he felt happier than ever. “Now no longer, at least in this department, have I to wish the good and half do it, and hate the bad and suffer it entire,” he confides to Knebel in the letter above quoted. “What happens now I must ascribe to myself, and nothing operates obscurely through a third and a fourth, but clear direct to me. That I have heretofore in silence pursued my labours with such fidelity and industry is an infinite aid; I now have clear practical notions of almost all needful matters



and minute inter-connections, and so I get easily through.”<sup>1</sup> The feeling of duty gave him new energy, though often, when his labours weighed heavy upon him, he could not help uttering bitter lamentation. It was but the escape-valve of that depression which gathers round all painful and protracted endeavour, and the more easily in his case because the tasks in which he disquieted himself were so opposite to his inner nature, and quite other objects drew his passionate spirit after them. Once, when it grew too hard for him, he wrote :—“ I am by right created a private person, and cannot understand how destiny could have foisted me into a princely family and the government of a State.”<sup>2</sup> Another time he writes :<sup>3</sup>—“ In Weimar, too, I remain dedicated to my old destiny, and suffer where others enjoy, and enjoy where others suffer.” Dejection carries him away to the excessive statement :—“ During the whole year not one pleasant task has sought me out.”<sup>4</sup> At times he is “ seethed and roasted with business ;”<sup>5</sup> for he attacked everything that he engaged in with all the earnestness of his nature, and often thought the most various matters so intensely over that his head ached. Often, too, he found the harsh Thüringian climate a cause of suffering, especially in the last two months of the year, and in January ; and not seldom, to add to his burthen, Charlotte was in ill-health, and out of sorts.

<sup>1</sup> It is perhaps well to quote the passage following :—“ As you may suppose, I talk on these subjects with no one, and accordingly I beg you to make no use of this—not even to benefit me.”—TR.

<sup>2</sup> Goethe to Charlotte von Stein, 17th September 1782.—TR.

<sup>3</sup> Goethe to F. H. Jacobi, 17th November 1782. The long silence with Jacobi was broken by Goethe in a letter dated 2d October 1782. To this Jacobi replied, and the letter here quoted replies to that reply.—TR.

<sup>4</sup> Goethe to Charlotte von Stein, April 24, 1783.—TR.

<sup>5</sup> Goethe to Charlotte von Stein, 31st January 1783.—TR.

But to these complaints, very natural in one who enjoyed and suffered so keenly, we may oppose his frequent statements of his complete happiness, and of the conviction that he can imagine no position more congenial, and more calculated to further him. "I were the most unthankful of men," he writes to Kestner, "not to confess my situation much happier than I deserve. Of course the heat and toilsomeness of life do not spare me, and it may accordingly happen that one at times grows very weary and faint, and even disheartened and sore."<sup>1</sup> We find him still, amid all his anxiety and nervous distraction, kind and sympathetic as ever. He still gives the children their annual Easter party—the *Haseneiersuchen*. In the year 1783 Matthisson witnessed how "the fine-looking man, in brown gold-fringed riding-suit, in the midst of the petulant, quicksilver group of children [among them were Fritz Stein, and children of Herder and Wieland], was like a kind but serious father, who compelled their reverence and love;" how he stayed with them until after sunset, and finally gave them a pyramid of dainties. And what generosity he shows towards the poor man whom he has provided for in Ilmenau;<sup>2</sup> how he compassionates the poor bookbinder who has a petition to the Committee of Taxes, and every word from whom is to him weighty as gold!<sup>3</sup> with what ardent kindness does he interest himself in the poverty-stricken poetess of Nature—Frau Bohl, in Lobeda.<sup>4</sup>

### I. Goethe's Activity in Public Business, 1782-6.—

Yet let us return to his official activity. To make good the

<sup>1</sup> Goethe to Kestner, March 15, 1783.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> Kraft. See p. 345.—TR.

<sup>3</sup> See Goethe's letter to Charlotte von Stein, November 11, 1785. He had called in the bookbinder to stitch the MS. of a book of *Wilhelm Meister* in his presence.—TR.

<sup>4</sup> Goethe to Charlotte von Stein, Jena, April 25, 1786.—TR.

deficiency in the finances was his first labour, one accompanied by much unpleasant circumstance. His infinite diligence, his painful attention, his strict economy, and the sense for order inherited from his father, triumphed, and by April 21, 1783, he can write to Knebel:—"My finance gets on better than I had hoped a year ago. I have fortune and success in my administration; hold my ground, however, in the firmest manner as to my plan and my principles of action." Seven months later he observes to Jacobi, after having spoken of the multitude of interests that made life difficult:—"And I have still my old disposition that brings me through everything."<sup>1</sup> On February 16, 1784, he writes to Knebel:—"I am diligent, and my affairs progress well, and, though we have all sorts of ups and downs in our circumstances, our *Economicum* stands on a sure basis, and that is the main thing. Personally I am happy." Great was the lightening of his burthen when, in July 1784, Privy Councillor of Legation Schmidt obtained a voice in the Council—a man seriously intent on what was useful and right, resolute to do his utmost in lessening the public expense. A very momentous undertaking was the parcelling-out (*Zerschlagen*) of the public domains which, with careful use of Darmstadt experience (1785), was now at last accomplished.<sup>2</sup> Goethe sent out officials to each locality, who learned the precise facts on the spot.

One of Goethe's most tiresome duties was that of treating with the Estates of Weimar and of Eisenach. In the beginning of August 1783 it actually falls on him to represent the Duke, and receive the Estates of Weimar, to whom, through the Chamber of Finance, he was now brought much nearer than formerly. In the Right of Assent to Supply which belonged to the Estates, he saw only a cause of embarrassment to any

<sup>1</sup> Goethe to Jacobi, November 12, 1784.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> Goethe to Merck, February 13, 1785.—TR.

good and powerful government, not remembering what security it would give against a wasteful and unconscientious prince. "Our business progresses tolerably," he writes when, in the June of 1784, the Estates of Eisenach are sitting, "only, unfortunately, of Nothing comes Nothing. I know well what ought to be done instead of all this racing and chasing, and all these Propositions and Resolutions."<sup>1</sup> To Herder he writes, June 20, 1784:—"In our business just one point interests me, and that is now settled. In all that remains there is no joy to be culled. The poor people must always bear the bag, and whether on the right side or the left is pretty indifferent."

Among those tasks which did not belong to the ordinary course of official duty, that which lay nearest his heart was the restoration of the Ilmenau Mines. Eckard's *Account of the mining formerly carried on in Ilmenau, and Proposals to revive it by a new Company*, was published by the Commission of Mines. Goethe, fond of making important beginnings on days already significant, had it dated from August 28, his birthday. The needful capital was estimated at 200,000 thalers; it was divided into 1000 shares. Immediately after this Eckard vacated his place on the Commission, and *Regierungs-rath* Christian Voigt entered as co-director; his brother, Johann Voigt, already mentioned (p. 338), with whom Goethe was intimate, became Secretary. The energy with which these two brothers got to work relieved and gladdened Goethe. Proposals for taking up the shares were sent out everywhere. On the 15th of February 1784 he writes to Knebel that five hundred shares are already disposed of, and the new shaft, to be called St. John's Shaft, will be opened next Shrove-Tide. On the 24th of February, Shrove Tuesday, from old time celebrated among the Ilmenau mining folk with a pageant, the Duke's Commission was solemnly waited on by the miners,

<sup>1</sup> Goethe to Charlotte von Stein, Eisenach, June 9, 1784.—TR.

who proposed conducting it to witness the festivities. Goethe greeted the procession in the name of the Commission in an excellent speech, his bearing marked by calm and serious dignity. Then they went first to the church, and when service was over, to the mine, where Goethe, having first made over to the new Company the old Martinröder Gallery, with everything that belonged to the earlier Company, took a new pick and struck the first blow. And the work prospered, for they had good labourers, and no untoward accident befell, while the Commission worked zealously in the cause, and cost nothing. Away from home, the Company gained people's trust, while in Weimar itself were circulating malicious and untrue stories of mishap. Goethe visited Ilmenau in October 1784, stayed from the 2d to the 15th. "We found many things to be done there," he tells the Duke; "and as we were intent on getting at the inner truth, we could not unduly hasten our proceedings, which is possible when mere mechanical paper-expedition is desired. I hope this work will prosper and give you great pleasure, so much is done already with but little expenditure, and in a short time. In a few weeks they will be through the wet region, and before Easter will be at the gallery."<sup>1</sup> The account with which he goes on shows how his solicitude extended to the minutest details. In this undertaking, as in others, he trusted in his good fortune.<sup>2</sup> The *First Report on the Progress of the new Mine at Ilmenau* dates February 24, 1785. In it is told in detail all that has been done in the first year of work at the new Shaft of St. John, and the old Martinröder Shaft. A magazine of corn for the workmen had been formed. In the June and the November of 1785 he was again at Ilmenau, where

<sup>1</sup> Goethe to Karl August, Oct. 18, 1784. Karl August was travelling then on the matter of the *Fürstenbund*. See p. 441.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> Goethe to Charlotte von Stein, October 5, 1784.—TR.



he finds plenty of work both out of doors and in his room. During the latter stay, 9th of November, he writes:—"That which I have founded prospers, and will improve every year. If I hold out and endure a while longer, it will be able to go of itself."<sup>1</sup> And again, "It is the way with occupations, they increase as you press deeper into them. They give me pleasure, because I can work on many sides. And if one but bring light anywhere, already is a great deal accomplished."<sup>2</sup> There was no *second* Report indeed next year, yet not the least obstacle had shown itself; everything went its prescribed course; and for the rest, said he, let the gods care.<sup>3</sup> In June 1786 he finds everything in such good order that he can go away with a mind at ease, though he would have liked to stay a good deal longer on account of business.

The War Department and the Department of Public Roads were also constant claimants on his attention and time. Much more pleasant were his agricultural inspections; here he was gladdened by seeing how well judgment, skill, and industry were rewarded. Only no one may devote himself to cultivating the land who is not of the land; whoever brings imagination to farming will come to grief—a notable instance of which he had in Charlotte's husband.<sup>4</sup>

He completely withdrew from theatrical managership, which had grown burdensome, nor did he appear on the stage any more. When, on the birth of an Hereditary Prince (Feb. 2, 1783), every Weimar poet made his Pegasus caracole bravely,

<sup>1</sup> Goethe to Charlotte von Stein, Nov. 9, 1785.

<sup>2</sup> Goethe to Charlotte von Stein, Nov. 10, 1785.—Tr.

<sup>3</sup> Goethe to Herder, November 11, 1785.—Tr.

<sup>4</sup> See Goethe's letter to Knebel, 19th May 1783. More than a year before, on April 12, 1782, Goethe wrote to Charlotte von Stein; "Man muss ganz nah' an der Erde geboren und erzogen sein, um ihr etwas abzugewinnen."—Tr.

Goethe contented himself with one simple lay, which was sung at the next *Redoute* (Feb. 15, 1783), at the hour of the birth, as a serenade.<sup>1</sup> At the great masked cavalcade procession of March 13, which the Duke himself led, Goethe, who without doubt had taken part in the ordering of it, appeared in old German garb; he was mounted on a white horse, and accompanied by boys clad in white and yellow, and bearing torches; he wore a purple cloak over white satin garments, and a small hat with a plume. The year following (1784) he charmed the Duchess at the Birthday *Redoute*, with the beautiful masque *Planetentanz*, hailing her as the happy mother of the Hereditary Prince.

In the autumn of 1783 they treated with Bellomo—a Vienna manager—about undertaking the theatre for three years; and in January 1784 Bellomo's company began to play three times a week, until spring. Goethe held back from all co-operation; the Prologues usual at the special representations before the Ducal family he calmly left to Einsiedel. Only once (on March 4, 1785) he was present at a rehearsal of his *Clavigo*, which had been cruelly misused in a representation a month before. When the Duchess Amalia, at Christmas 1785, wished to revive the amateur theatre, he yielded a promise to play Orestes in his own *Iphigenie*; but the Duchess's project fell through.

Goethe took less share in the Park improvements during this period, as the Duke had grown zealous in the matter; the Duke looked after the planting at Belvedere also, and had trees brought from England for it. Goethe sketched the plan on which the Duchess Amalia proceeded in autumn 1782 to improve Tiefurt Park, but he took no part in the execution of the plan. On the other hand he zealously urged on the works

<sup>1</sup> See in Goethe's *Gedichte* in the section *An Personen*, the verses beginning, "Vor vierzehn Tagen harrten wir."—Tr.

rendered necessary by the ice-choke which flooded Jena in the last days of February 1784. He had immediately hastened to the spot with the Duke, who writes to Merck that Goethe was very brave in the danger, and took the best measures. The works thus rendered needful brought him to Jena frequently. He had to decide as to the arranging of the great library which *Hofrath* Büttner made over to the Duke in exchange for a dwelling rent-free, and an annuity. On May 7, 1784, Goethe writes from Jena to Charlotte :—"My business goes on well ; I have as much money, power, judgment, persons, and skill thereto as is needful ; and so it can hardly fail." Later on he left the work mainly in Castrop's hands. Also the care of arrangements of police—fire organisation, for example, and the fire engines especially, which were admirably good in Weimar—fell to Goethe ; and many other matters defying classification, such as the rebuilding (Oct. 1784) of the *Grimenstein* into a spinning-house for the poor.

Not less did he exert himself on behalf of the University and its arrangements. The choice of a man to fill the vacant Chair of Law occupied him a good while. Even the empty matter of titles gave him trouble. The Professor of Theology, Döderlein, had come to Jena in 1782 with the understanding that he might look forward to the title *Geheimer Kirchenrath* (Ecclesiastical Privy Councillor). When in 1784 they determined to confer it on him, Herder felt injured, and refused to accept the same title *after* Döderlein ; Goethe tried to pacify Herder,<sup>1</sup> who was at perpetual variance with the Supreme Consistory ; Herder's place and condition he was indeed unable to improve. But Goethe did not stop at the University, the Schools too he took on his shoulders ; only the supplies of money were insufficient, and an increase was not at present

<sup>1</sup> See Goethe's admirable letter to Herder's wife, dated May 1784.  
—TR.

to be thought of. At the end of August 1783 he writes to Herder:—"I beg you accordingly at the beginning of my new year to put together your thoughts on our entire School system, and to talk with me about it when I come back. I will gladly do my part towards carrying out what you think practicable."<sup>1</sup> But where the Supreme Consistory opposed all effort proved unavailing; the only point carried by Herder was the substitution of money rewards for the Honorary Commons (then fallen into disuse) of the students at the Weimar *Gymnasium*. The Duke approved of the general scheme of School Reform laid before him by Goethe and Herder, but the means of paying the new teachers moved for was not. On January 6, 1786, Goethe writes to Herder:—"As I hear that a Rescript has been issued to the Supreme Consistory on the subject School Reform agreeable to your propositions in the matter. . . . I request you to extend your plan to include the Military School, disposing therein as pleases you." But precisely in School Reform Goethe had neither untrammelled power of action nor the needful money; what the Duke was able to spare from private resources did not go far.

**II. Goethe and Natural Science, 1782-6.**—Meanwhile, those scientific studies, which had in large measure sprung from his official duties, and which still linked on to them, grew constantly wider in range and more fruitful. He strove to discover in all things the single law by which the rich variety and diversity of phenomena proceeds. On November 21, 1782, he can write to Knebel as follows:—"Cosmogony and the latest discoveries in that field, Mineralogy," and in the most recent period my calling to make myself familiar with

<sup>1</sup> This letter was written on August 29, 1783, the day after Goethe's birthday. He is about to start on the second Harz journey (he did so ten days later), from which he returned in the beginning of October 1783.—TR.

Economics—the whole History of Nature surrounds me like Bacon's great House of Solomon, that Herder and Nicolai dispute about." He gets Voigt to extend Charpentier's mineralogical map to include the whole region from the Harz to the Fichtelgebirge, and from the Riesengebirge to the Rhön; and he already thought of carrying through a mineralogical map of Europe.<sup>1</sup> He is fully convinced that the bone remains found in the upper sand of the earth are of the latest epoch, "which, however, compared with our ordinary reckonings of time, is of vast antiquity;" and that fossils are of great value in classifying the rock-strata.<sup>2</sup> With passionate zeal he through the following years pursues the indications of the laws of rock-formation (litho-genesis) at Ilmenau, on the Harz, on the Fichtelgebirge, and finally at Karlsbad. At the Harz, in August and September 1784, the most important rock forms are sketched by Kraus, and briefly determined; the days were spent in the open air, hammering; stones and specimens were gathered and brought to Weimar, where they were studied and arranged.<sup>3</sup> An essay on granite<sup>4</sup> as the basis of the known crust of the earth was begun, part of a

<sup>1</sup> Goethe to Merck, November 1782.—Tr.

<sup>2</sup> Goethe to Merck, October 27, 1782 :—"The time will come when fossils will no more be thrown confusedly together, but will be classified with reference to the ages of the earth." See Herr Kalischer's interesting comments on this passage, Hempel's Goethe, Bd. xxxiii., Seite clx.—Tr.

<sup>3</sup> See, beside letters of the time to Herder and Charlotte von Stein, Goethe's *Geognostisches Tagebuch der Harzreise, 1784*, first printed in Hempel's edition of Goethe, Bd. xxxiii. S. 438. This was Goethe's third journey to the Harz.—Tr.

<sup>4</sup> Goethe writes to Charlotte von Stein, Jan. 18, 1784 :—"Early this morning I began dictating at my *Abhandlung über den Granit*." This essay is first printed entire in Hempel's Goethe, Bd. xxxiii., Seite clxii. clxvi. Goethe wrote a good deal about granite in that letter to Merck of Nov. 1782, already quoted.—Tr.



*Theory of Rock-formation*<sup>1</sup> written. And the further he pushed his researches, the more certain did he feel that he was on the right path.<sup>2</sup> He thinks he has discovered that masses of stone of considerable size sunder into parallelopipeds, which split easily along any of their diagonals.<sup>3</sup> Charlotte and Knebel felt warm interest in these studies, while Herder makes fun of such "hammering at deaf stone." But after Goethe's first visit to Karlsbad (1785), he put mineralogy aside, believing a knowledge of chemistry to be indispensable for his further advance.<sup>4</sup> Into the last-named science he could find no entrance, though he thought seriously of beginning it, and planned about having the needful laboratory;<sup>5</sup> something held him back—perhaps remembrance of the gloomy alchemic experiments in the invalid period after his return from Leipzig University.

Osteological studies ran a parallel course to mineralogical. His particular endeavour was to follow up the type of bone-formation in brutes and men and find it identical,—an endeavour in which the bones of extinct species must of course draw his attention. Merck's letters, a visit from the famous anatomist Blumenbach, the Anatomical Theatre at Kassel, where he converses with Forster and Sömmering, and especially Loder in Jena, brought him on his way. And on the 27th of March

<sup>1</sup> Goethe to Charlotte von Stein, Ilmenau, 7th June 1785:—"Ich habe wieder einige Capitel am *Wilhelm* diktirt und etwas an meiner *Gebirgslehre* geschrieben."—TR.

<sup>2</sup> Goethe's letters, 1783-5, *passim*, but the phrase, "auf dem rechten Wege," occurs in a letter to Charlotte von Stein, Jena, März 8, 1785.—TR.

<sup>3</sup> See in Hempel's Goethe, Bd. xxxiii. S. 447, the essay *Gestaltung der grossen anorganischen Massen*. See on page 448.—TR.

<sup>4</sup> Goethe to Charlotte von Stein, August 16, 1786.—TR.

<sup>5</sup> Goethe to Karl August, Oct. 18, 1784; Goethe to Charlotte von Stein, Oct. 26, 1784.—TR.

1784, when, in company with the last named, he compares the skulls of men and animals, he makes to his great joy the discovery, pregnant with result, that the intermaxillary bone of the upper jaw (*os intermaxillare*) exists in Man as in Animals; thus sweeping away the theory which found precisely in that bone's supposed absence in man the characteristic by which man is defined from all animals, a theory adverse to Goethe's way of conceiving Nature. He saw plainly how the bone, so extraordinarily prominent in animals, was contracted to a very small size in man, through the influence of his physical history and habits. Passionately then did Goethe with Loder investigate the varying formation of the intermaxillary in different animals. When in Eisenach (meeting the Estates) in June 1784, he procures the elephant's skull from Kassel, and afterwards takes it to Weimar with him.<sup>1</sup>

When about to visit Brunswick in August 1784, he plans to examine carefully the elephant foetus there, and to have a good talk with the physician Zimmermann.<sup>2</sup> Herder and Charlotte took the warmest interest in his important discovery. All that passes through Goethe's mode of conceiving and presenting, wrote the latter, becomes extremely interesting, even hateful bones and the dreary mineral kingdom. Not until October 1784 could he get his essay<sup>3</sup> worked out; its illustrative references were made to admirable sketches, supplied by one of the pupils of the Drawing Academy<sup>4</sup> under Goethe's guidance. It is admirably written. Herder thought it "simple and beautiful." Goethe himself, when sending it to Loder through Knebel, writes to the latter (in November

<sup>1</sup> Goethe to Charlotte von Stein, June 7, and June 17, 1784.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> Goethe to Merck, August 6, 1784.

<sup>3</sup> *Dem Menschen wie den Thieren ist ein Zwischenknochen der obern Kinnlade zuzuschreiben.* Not published until 1820.—TR.

<sup>4</sup> Named Waiz. See Goethe to Merck, Dec. 19, 1784.—TR.

1784):—"I have refrained from indicating the logical outcome of the discovery—it is a truth to which Herder has already pointed in his *Ideen*, viz. that the distinctness of man from the brute is not to be looked for in any single point of difference. On the contrary, man is most closely related to the brute. Every creature is what it is through the unity of its whole being, and man is man as much by the form and nature of his upper jaw, as by the form and nature of his little toe. And so, too, every creature is a note, a shade, in a great harmony, and the study which apprehends this harmony as a whole and in its vastness is alone fruitful; each isolated thing, otherwise taken, is a meaningless letter." How high Goethe's merit in this remarkable, and by no means easy, discovery is, may be estimated from the fact that the great men of science, Sömmering and Camper, to whom he sent his treatise<sup>1</sup> (in a careful Latin translation), refused to accept his conclusions.<sup>2</sup> And at first Merck, too, was sceptical. Not until 1788 was the discovery incorporated into received scientific knowledge by Loder; but it was still long before it won ground. Goethe learned by painful experience that (as he writes to Merck, April 8, 1785) a *savant* by profession renounces his five senses. "They are concerned rarely about the living conception of the matter, but about what has been said on it." The admirable essay was not published until thirty years later.

And now osteological inquiry became subordinate to botanical; if he was late in entering this new field, he did so with the greater ardour. His observation of trees and plants was not confined to the familiar places around him—to the garden and park which he had planted, but in his manifold traversing of mountain and forest the collection of specimens

<sup>1</sup> Goethe to Merck, December 19, 1784.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> See as to Sömmering, Goethe to Merck, Feb. 13, 1785, and April 8, 1785.—TR.

was always a main object. He did not exclude the mosses<sup>1</sup> from his interest, but endeavoured to gain clear notions of their differences of species by an ample gathering. Though we find him in June 1782 enjoying Rousseau's "delightful" (*allerliebste*) letters on Botany,<sup>2</sup> not until January 1785 does he occupy himself after scientific fashion with the world of plants. On the 12th of that month he tells Jacobi that he has a microscope set up in his room; for it is his intention when spring comes to follow up and check the recent discoveries of F. W. Gleichen, called Russworm.<sup>3</sup> He grew especially interested in the conception of the seed as the basis of all development.<sup>4</sup> He has conversations with Büttner at Jena on botanical matters; they dissect cocoa-nuts together, and observe the beginnings of the remarkable tree.<sup>5</sup> Another Jena botanical friend was the young Master of Arts, August Johann Batsch, who had studied medicine and natural science at the University there, and, besides, had published some poetic attempts. He was living at Weimar in difficulties when Goethe made his acquaintance on the ice. His delicate precision and quiet zeal attracted Goethe, who prompted him to return to Jena—there to devote himself entirely to natural science. And now Goethe found scientific talk with him very pleasant. In Weimar Charlotte is called to sympathise in the "right beautiful revelations"<sup>6</sup> resulting from examination of seeds

<sup>1</sup> See Goethe to Charlotte von Stein, Oct. 31, 1778.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> Goethe to Karl August, June 16, 1782.—TR.

<sup>3</sup> F. W. Gleichen, genannt Russworm: *Auserlesene mikroskopische Entdeckungen bei Pflanzen Blumen und Blüthen u.s.w.* Nürnberg, 1771-81.—TR.

<sup>4</sup> Goethe to Charlotte von Stein, April 1, 1785. Goethe to Knebel, April 2, 1785.—TR.

<sup>5</sup> Goethe to Charlotte von Stein, Jena, March 8, 1785. (Goethe calls Büttner "the old living encyclopædic Dictionary.")—TR.

<sup>6</sup> Goethe to Charlotte von Stein, April 1, 1785.—TR.

through the microscope. On the 2d of April Goethe says:—"Perhaps we will write at the little botanical treatise for Knebel this evening." On the journey of this summer of 1785 into the Fichtelgebirge he takes with him, as a help in collecting flowers and plants, Friedrich Gottlieb Dietrich of Ziegenhain—a lad of seventeen—who had considerable knowledge of botany, and whose fresh, simple personality pleased him.

When at Ilmenau in November 1785 he is so in love with the vegetable kingdom that he makes a vow "this time not to touch a bit of rock."<sup>1</sup> He reads the *Philosophia Botanica* of Linnæus regularly through; until now he had but dipped in it. And he writes that he has "some pretty ideas again." In the January of 1786 he discusses all sorts of botanical matters with the Court-gardener Reichardt in Belvedere,<sup>2</sup> and in April 1786 at Jena he and Batsch talk about "plants, infusions, etc."<sup>3</sup> In May he dictates *Botanica* to Fritz. When he writes as follows in June from Ilmenau, he at any rate means to include the vegetable kingdom:—"How plain the book of Nature is becoming, I cannot express; my long spelling-out has served me; now all at once a rapid progress begins, and my silent joy is unspeakable. Much new knowledge as I gain, yet none unexpected; everything tallies and coheres, because I come with no *à priori* system, and desire nothing but the truth for its own sake. How that ability to read Nature will increase it delights me to think on."<sup>4</sup>

When in July 1786 he sees himself detained in Weimar,

<sup>1</sup> Goethe to Charlotte von Stein, November 8, 1785:—"I have some pretty botanical ideas again, and have made a vow, this time not to touch a bit of rock."—TR.

<sup>2</sup> Goethe to Charlotte von Stein, Jan. 20, 1786.—TR.

<sup>3</sup> Goethe to Charlotte von Stein, April 25, 1786.—TR.

<sup>4</sup> Goethe to Charlotte von Stein, June 15, 1786.—TR.



contrary to his desire to get to Karlsbad, the plant-world takes hold of him with passion; it "rages" within him.<sup>1</sup> The delight which fills him speaks in the following avowal in a later part of his letter:—"Everything forces its meaning on me; I no longer *think* a subject over; everything, everything comes to meet me, and the vast kingdom simplifies itself in my soul, that I soon shall be able to read the hardest exercise straight off. If I could only communicate to any one the prospect and the joy; but it is not possible. And this is no dream, no fantasy; it is a growing aware of the essential Form, with which Nature but keeps playing ever, as it were, and playing thus brings forth the manifold Life. Were but the short period given to man longer, I believe that I could extend this to all the kingdoms—to the whole great kingdom of Nature."

Thus in occupation with Nature had a whole new life risen upon him; the clear insight which he gained cheered him; "the Consequence of Nature made bounteous amends for the Inconsequence of Men;"<sup>2</sup> the steadfast precision of her being for all the inaptness, the uncomprehending, the unprofiting, which he had to encounter day after day. That calm observing glance, piercing always to essentials, always seeing things in a vivid real way, by which the characters of men and their complicated action and interaction had been made plain to him, now turned on external Nature and her laws by no light caprice, but by a deep inward compelling.

Compared with the study of the Three Kingdoms, the other parts of natural science engaged him but little; astronomy, however attractive, was less easy to overtake, and meteorology, while he did not remain completely a stranger to it,<sup>3</sup> seemed

<sup>1</sup> Goethe to Charlotte von Stein, July 10, 1786.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> Goethe to Knebel, April 2, 1785.—TR.

<sup>3</sup> See for instance, Goethe to Karl August, Oct. 18, 1784, and *Die*

yet too unreliable to reward application. Experimental physics only occupied him transitorily, chiefly in connection with the ascent of air-balloons.<sup>1</sup> If he gets instructed at Jena in the first four rules in algebra,<sup>2</sup> it remains a barren bit of learning, for he had no organ for mathematics.

**III. Goethe's Literary Activity, 1782-1786.**—The study of nature had pushed drawing and painting into the background ; besides, we read, "the sketching fever has been driven away by the bitter bark of life's timber."<sup>3</sup> Still worse fared the practice of engraving, of modelling, and of casting in bronze. For the art towards which his deepest being strove—for poetry—the needful collectedness was wanting. Yet she stood at his command whenever the impulse came to give to inward emotions a living form. Witness the poem *Ilmenau*,<sup>4</sup> the various lyrics and epigrams scattered through the years, and, above all, though alas ! unfinished, *Die Geheimnisse*.<sup>5</sup> For *Wilhelm Meister*, with its wealth and breadth of life and thought, he was gathering perpetually fresh materials in the manifold activity of this period. Steadily urged by Charlotte, Goethe succeeded in bringing to completion six books of the novel by November 1785.<sup>6</sup> But he could not get the seventh

*Italiänische Reise*, Sept 8. Goethe suffered so much from the Thuringian climate, that he had a special personal interest in weather.—TR.

<sup>1</sup> Goethe to Knebel, Dec. 23, 1783 ; Goethe to Charlotte von Stein, May 19, 1784, with the footnote.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> Goethe to Charlotte von Stein, May 21 and May 23, 1786.—TR.

<sup>3</sup> Goethe to Knebel, March 3, 1783 (the close of the letter).—TR.

<sup>4</sup> *Ilmenau*, dedicated to Karl August, and dated "3d September 1783." —TR.

<sup>5</sup> *Die Geheimnisse* begun August 1784 ; see Goethe to Herder and Herder's wife, August 8, 1784. On March 27 and 28, 1785, we find him doing his two stanzas daily. On April 2, 1785, he tells Knebel that 48 stanzas are written.—TR.

<sup>6</sup> We have seen that Goethe was dictating at the first book of *Wilhelm*

book done; he stuck fast as he had in *Tasso*, and in *Elpenor* later than *Tasso*. The pressure of business prevented the free current of creative genius; the impossible was the impossible to him as to other men. But though the growth of many a flower of verse was stifled in the arduous pre-occupation with business and practical affairs, there was yet great gain in this period; it was a time of transition needful for the development of the *man* Goethe, not to be sundered from the development of the poet; without the *Weimar Years of Service*, without the mastery of self, and the deep and wide experience which they brought, Goethe would never have been the richly fraught World Poet, the complete reporter and interpreter of German soul and intellect.

An accident led Goethe's attention to the further development of the comic opera. Friend Kayser, after a considerable time of silence, surprised him in the spring of 1784, by announcing that—mainly induced by a longing for the old Italian music—he was accompanying a young merchant in Italy. To think of Kayser treading the Promised Land, which “I, like a prophet who has sinned, only see lying before me in the indistinctness far away,”<sup>1</sup> awakened, of course, a feeling of

*Meister's Lehrjahre* in February 1777. On January 2, 1778, he writes in his *Diary* :—“Early to-day finished B. i. of *Meister*.” Book ii. was finished in August 1782; Book iii., Nov. 12, 1782; Book iv., Nov. 12, 1783; Book v., Oct. 16, 1784; Book vi., at Ilmenau, Nov. 11, 1785. See Goethe's letters of the dates mentioned, and *passim*. The present division into books by no means corresponds with this earliest division. For instance, Goethe writes to Charlotte von Stein, June 20, 1785 :—“Hierbei ein Liedchen von Mignon aus dem sechsten Buche.” And the last line of his next letter to her is “Ach! wer die Sehnsucht kennt!” The song sent is thus evidently the song, “Nur wer die Sehnsucht kennt,” now in Book iv. See in Hempel's Goethe, Band xvii., Düntzer's introduction to the *Lehrjahre*.—TR.

<sup>1</sup> Goethe to Kayser, June 24, 1784.—TR.

sadness ; but at the same time, the old desire to stir his friend (now to Goethe's joy emerged from the gloom which was destroying all his power and activity) to the production of some work in which they should be partners. On the 24th of June 1784 Goethe writes from Eisenach to Kayser, "Even though I be at present in unpoetic circumstances, the sleeping genius can yet be awakened." On the 28th of June he tells Kayser that since the beginning of the year he had seen the Bellomo company [just then in Eisenach] play [in good translations] a dozen of the best Italian comic operas. "Life, movement, seasoned with feeling, all forms of passion, find there their scene. Especially am I charmed with the delicacy and grace by which the composer, like some heavenly being, as it were, hovers above the earthly nature of the poet." If not earlier, he was at any rate, by some letter received from Kayser between June 24 and June 28, moved to think of an operetta ; for referring to such a letter, he writes (beginning the letter last quoted) :—"That you love the comic opera, and long for work, are two good things I am glad to hear. I have always liked the *opera buffa* of the Italians, and wished some time or other to bring out in fellowship with you a little work of the kind."<sup>1</sup> So far back as 1777, the performances of *Intermezzos*, which a German *Buffo*, Anton Berger, with his wife, used to give in a room, had interested Goethe ; he would add a third voice mediate to the former two, and thought over several subjects, one of which he at length began to develop into the operetta, *Scherz, List und Rache*. By August 14, 1784, he can write to Charlotte that it is nearly ready ; yet after this—Goethe having seen an admirable performance of Salieri's *Scuola di Gelosi* in Brunswick—it remained for more than half a year unprogressing. Not until April 1785 was it sent to Kayser, who found a certain Italian quality in its form.

<sup>1</sup> Burkhardt, *Goethe und Kayser*, S. 21.—TR.

Goethe thought it a considerable advance on his earlier operettas. Kayser set about his work with thorough relish. By September 1785 the music of the first act had arrived. On December 4, 1785, Goethe tells Kayser how he has been going through the piece with the singers; it gives him great delight, and they will have it brought out on every German stage. But in truth Knebel's account of the München stage had been by no means encouraging. The moral taste prevailing there seemed to Goethe the most unfavourable for artists, the most favourable for bunglers. But he meant to stand to his friend, and, at the same time, elevate the "miserable German lyric theatre," which "every one, who can sing or play, leaves for the Italian, and with right."<sup>1</sup> And he thinks that even for the München palate, he can prepare something acceptable; he meditates another piece in which the effect desirable shall be cared for; he means to give to a material (*Die ungleichen Hausgenossen*) already thought out, a wider compass. On December 23, 1785, he tells Kayser of his plan, which some persons of taste have approved. The performance (Dec. 1785) of the first two acts of *Scherz, List und Rache* at Court won general applause, Herder being one of those most pleased, whom Goethe held the most reliable judge among all the lovers of music then near.<sup>2</sup> But the composer himself was the least content with his work; the piece was, he felt, too full of action, too much extended,—was too great a task for three actors;<sup>3</sup> he complained also of the difficulty which the language gave him, the poet having intentionally taken peculiar liberties. Goethe sent emendations (Dec. 23, 1785) for

<sup>1</sup> Goethe to Knebel, Dec. 30, 1785.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> Goethe to Kayser, from Riemer's *Mittheilungen über Goethe*.—TR.

<sup>3</sup> Goethe to Kayser, Jan. 23, 1786:—"Die andere Bemerkung ist leider eben so richtig, dass das Stück für ein musikalisch Drama zu angezogen, zu angestrengt ist. Zu viel Arbeit für drey Personen."—TR.



single passages in the fourth act; urged, however (Jan. 23, 1786), that no corrections should be made in the first act until the whole piece was completed. He has at length regretfully to acknowledge the justness of Kayser's fear that the piece is not suitable for representation on the stage; and he will not ever again write such a piece with but three persons—though he has another delightful subject, almost richer, almost madder. He has thoughts of recasting *Claudine* and *Erwin und Elmire*.<sup>1</sup> His thoughts clung in a morbid, excited way to his poor operetta; he pities the good Kayser who is "wasting his music on this barbarous language."<sup>2</sup> Kayser's third act was performed on the 5th of February 1786. The latter part of the composition receives from Goethe the same generous praise as the earlier. He writes to Kayser on the 5th of May,<sup>3</sup> that what he (Goethe) has learned in this their first partnership shall be proved by the piece that is coming, from which, too, something new will be learned, and so on, always learning. His mind was troubled as he wrote this letter, for he could not reveal to his friend how soon he was going to Italy. Yet he was impelled, by conscience one might say, to speak of a journey to Italy—"Had I the Italian tongue at my command, as I have the unlucky German, I would invite you straight to a journey beyond the Alps." The attempt at opera had failed, and that single airs or acts might be given was a poor comfort to Kayser, who immediately began to compose the operetta afresh, in order to attain his first ambition. To Goethe the effort, first prompted by affection for his friend, had proved a lively stimulus, and he had gained clear insight into a new form of his art.

Thus, beneath the overwhelming load of many affairs,

<sup>1</sup> Burkhardt, *Goethe und Kayser*, S. 29-34.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> Goethe to Charlotte von Stein, Gotha, Jan. 26, 1786.—TR.

<sup>3</sup> He has received the music of the fifth act from Kayser.—TR.

which, to use his own words, cultivated him while he cultivated them,<sup>1</sup> the restless poet continually found time to give to literature and science, "for which he was born."<sup>2</sup> Nay, precisely through his occupations he had been brought so very near to the natural sciences; and them for a time he wooed more ardently than poetry, to which in a future of riper accomplishment, of artist insight from a higher vantage, his soul was yet to yield her complete homage. His creative genius was but fallen in a short slumber, to wake with strength renewed, nor had the slumber been unbroken:—"But at the heart of all my plans, designs, and enterprises, I remain mysteriously true to myself, and manage to re-unite the diverging threads of my social, political, moral, and poetic life, in a knot concealed from common ken."<sup>3</sup>

**IV. Goethe's Relations with the Duke and the Court of Weimar, 1782-1786.**—But how did he stand with the Duke and the Court during these years? Immediately after his appointment on the Chamber of Finance in the summer of 1782, the life of the Duke and Duchess together grew happier than it had been, while the Duchess Amalia enjoyed life in her Tiefurt very much. In Tiefurt, on the night of July 22, 1782, Goethe's operetta, *Die Fischerin*, was performed, and gave great pleasure. To the Duchess Amalia, who had always been his good friend, he presented a fair copy of his unprinted writings; he had already given one to Charlotte von Stein. Karl August, indeed, has the old faults still, but Goethe seems to find a sort of general consolation in regarding them as "a prince's obliquities" (*fürstliche Queren*), which one must put up with. "The Duchess is as charming

<sup>1</sup> Goethe to Knebel, Dec. 30, 1785:—"Meine Geschäfte gehen ihren Gang, sie bilden mich, indem ich sie bilde."—TR.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 414.—TR.

<sup>3</sup> Goethe to Knebel, Nov. 21, 1782.—TR.

as any one can be," he writes on the 27th of August 1782 to Charlotte; "the Duke is a good fellow, and one could love him dearly if he did not make social intercourse curdle with his impertinences, and by his headlong plunging into danger did not compel his friends to become indifferent to his welfare or his misfortune." Vexatious as it is, that the Duke should be so attracted by the playing at soldiers of drill and parade, that he should "have his existence in coursing and hunting,"<sup>1</sup> and should pursue trivial objects with passionate eagerness; yet Goethe is glad that "he takes a willing and reasonable share in affairs, and is now and then anxious about some good thing." True, "the illusion—that the fair germs which ripen in my own being and in my friends, must be sown in this soil, and that those heavenly pearls could be set in the earthly crowns of these princes—is departed." Goethe saw that Karl August and he must move beside each other on different paths. For a time he holds aloof from the Court, and often allows the Duke to travel without him. And when, in December 1782, he follows the Duke to Neuenheiligen, and then is with him in Dessau and Leipzig, he secures his freedom by leaving Neuenheiligen earlier, and by staying in Leipzig later than his companion.

The birth of a hereditary prince (February 3, 1783) was followed by a remarkable change for the better in Karl August, who, in reply to Merck's congratulations, writes:—"Whatever tendencies to goodness lay within me, there was as yet—by force of circumstances—no sure point where they could centre and connect. Now, however, a firm hold-fast is driven by which I can hang my pictures. With Goethe's help, and the help of good fortune, I will so paint them that those who come after shall say: *Ed egli fu pittore.*"

<sup>1</sup> Goethe to Knebel, Nov. 21, 1782. From the same letter are taken the two quotations that follow.—TR.

The time which followed was one of gladness for Weimar, marred only by the perplexity and shame which the adventures of Prince Constantin abroad brought on the Court. Much good had been hoped from this journey,—by Goethe among the rest,—but their expectation had been brought to nought by the Prince's amour with a Madame Darsaincourt, whom he, when wearied of her, had sent to Weimar<sup>1</sup> without further ceremony. By Goethe's advice she was placed in the house of the chief forester at Tannroda, and she declared herself *enceinte*, which rendered the deep annoyance of the matter deeper. Soon the wastefulness and debts of the Prince became known, and Goethe, who had the task of meeting difficulties, was exceedingly distressed. We find him at Tannroda on the 4th of May 1783, looking after the accommodation of Mme. Darsaincourt. After the birth of her infant she was sent back to France under the charge of trusty Philipp Seidel. But Prince Constantin was not done yet. When met by *Chatoullier* Ludecus at Wiesbaden, he was found to have an English mistress with him. It was at once decided to send her to Marksuhl, to order the Prince to Wilhelmsthal. To Wilhelmsthal went Goethe and the Duke to await the arrival of the Prince. Thence he writes, on June 16, 1783, that Ludecus has told him things of the Prince than which nothing more pitiful can be imagined. The greater is the pleasure with which he turns to the Duke, who is "in very good paths." "We have had real good talk on many things," the letter goes on; "there is a great dawn of light in him, and he will certainly grow happier himself, and a greater blessing to others." When Constantin, after some delay, has arrived in Wilhelmsthal, Goethe writes, June 18, 1783:—"The entanglement of the Prince has several knots

<sup>1</sup> He met her in Paris, took her to London with him, thence sent her to Weimar.—Tr.

still left, which need patience in the untying." Meanwhile, a shelter must be found for the English mistress; she became unwell, and her deportation had to be put off. So Goethe applied to his old friend Riese in Frankfurt for help in the matter. He returned to Weimar with the Prince on June 20. The Duke took his brother to Ilmenau, then went with him to Würzburg (July 21), and behaved admirably throughout the miserable affair. What high hope he inspired in Goethe at this time may be read in the noble birthday gratulation, *Ilmenau*, composed on the 3d of September 1783 at the Gickelhahn.

But soon after the lively interest which the *Fürstenbund* (Bund or Alliance of German Princes) roused in the Duke became a cause of disquiet to Goethe. He would have Karl August confine himself to being a good father (*Hausvater*) to his own dominions; but Karl August held it a paternal duty to oppose the encroachment of Austria, and to secure the freedom of the German princes. Active negotiation with Baden, Gotha, Brunswick, and Mainz was being carried on by the Duke and the Prince of Dessau, when the death of the little Princess Luise, on March 24, 1784, plunged the Court in grief. The Duke felt it deeply; but far more the Duchess, who withdrew into still greater retirement. In the sad days that followed, Goethe did much to comfort her in her sorrow; many extra cares fell on his shoulders. Meanwhile, Prince Constantin had, through the Duke's influence, obtained a Lieutenant-Colonelcy in the Saxon army—an arrangement which Goethe did not altogether approve; but he knew how to content himself with the part of silent looker-on at these family affairs. In August 1784 he could not refuse to go with the Duke to Brunswick, though he had hardly, as he writes to Merck, worked off the arrears which had gathered in June and July during his absence at Eisenach. At Bruns-



wick the Duke worked for the *Fürstenbund*, and was completely successful; how admirable was his demeanour amid the polite court ceremonial, so alien and distasteful to his nature, is observed by Goethe with great satisfaction. Goethe refused, however, to go on to Zweibrücken, where Karl August was to pursue the same eagerly-desired object. In order not to betray the purpose of his journey, the Duke had to extend it far; to the discontent of his subjects he went even to Zürich. Writing from Frankfurt, where Frau Aja gave him a breakfast, he asked Goethe to come and fetch him home; but Goethe abode firmly by this answer—that for more than one reason he cannot at present leave Weimar.<sup>1</sup> When the close of 1784 found Karl August still delaying his return—kept back in his coming, notwithstanding the general displeasure, by hunting-parties—Goethe is disappointed and vexed. On the 26th of December 1784 he writes to the Duke:—"I desire that all you do on this journey, and all that befalls you, may tend to your use and profit. The delight in the chase also I grant you with all my heart, and cherish the hope that you, on the other hand, on your return, will free those who look to you (*die Ihrigen*) from the dread of a threatening evil." The preserving of wild boars on the Ettersberg had proved an injury to the whole neighbourhood, and had roused the bitterest anger. "I have seen you renounce many such things," runs this letter, remarkable equally for its frankness and its delicacy, "and I hope that you will make us a New Year's gift of this partiality; and for the disquietude which I have endured through the colony since its planting, only compensate me with the skull of the general mother of the hateful brood, which I can thus place in my museum with a twofold pleasure." Not until the evening of January 11,

<sup>1</sup> See Goethe to Karl August, December 26, 1784 (the beginning of the letter).—TR.

1785, did the Duke return. Then, notwithstanding all reasons for discontent, Goethe was glad to find awakened within him a love for natural science, and for the quiet, certain path which the student of nature travels.

Unfortunately, for the time the affairs of the *Fürstenbund* dominated over every other interest in the Duke's mind. That its secrecy might be preserved, Goethe had with his own hand to make copies of the several communications with the Courts ; this service he had performed at an earlier period also. Meanwhile, the general hope had been set on the birth of a second prince—the Hereditary Prince was very weakly—but the son whom the Duchess bore on the 27th of February 1785 died immediately. A month later Goethe fell into great anxiety when the Duke took the side of Prussia against Austria,—nay, had made up his mind to join in the possible war. He asked Goethe's advice indeed, who knew only too well that temper had already decided the course of things. "The delight in war which works beneath the skin in our princes like a kind of itch," writes Goethe to Knebel, April 1, 1785, "wearies me like a bad dream, in which you must fly, and you try to, but your feet deny you service. To me they appear like dreamers of this fashion, and it is as though I dreamt with them——. Leave them their pleasant delusion. The prudent dealing of the big ones will, let us hope, spare the little ones the action which they would fain engage in at the cost of other men's blood and suffering. On this head I have no longer either mercy and sympathy, nor hope and forbearance." And Goethe's conviction that there was misfortune for the country in this interference with external politics was so earnest, that a coldness with Karl August resulted,—nay, in our poet's ailing condition, and the vexation thus intensified, the thought of leaving Weimar returned.<sup>1</sup> The

<sup>1</sup> See page 402.—Tr.

affectionate words of Knebel, with whom in Jena, at the end of April, he took refuge, brought serenity and courage back.<sup>1</sup> And his relations with the Duke were soon on a tolerable footing again. In May Goethe writes to Charlotte:—"The Duke, who, as is well known, is a great believer in salvings of conscience, gave me before his departure [for Pymont] a rise of 200 thalers, and sent me 40 louis d'or for the Karlsbad journey." Goethe's salary was thus brought to 1600 thalers.

After a June, July, and August of travel, Goethe, back from Karlsbad, is ill-pleased with the instability of things in Weimar. "Here all goes on after the old fashion," he writes on the 1st of September 1785, to Knebel; "Alas for the fair building which might endure, and be lifted high, and spread wide, and can find no solid ground to rest on." There was great discontent because the Court Table was given up; only three maids of honour and one male outsider dined each day with the Duke and Duchess, in the Duke's private room. The courtiers received board-money. On the 5th of September 1785 Goethe writes to Charlotte von Stein:—"The Duke is happy in his pack of hounds [a present from *Oberkammerherr* von Pöllnitz]. I do not grudge it him. He puts away the courtiers, puts on the dogs. It is always the same—a great hubbub merely to hunt a hare to death. And it gives me almost as much trouble to keep a hare alive!" Some days later—"Now and then I see the Prince [the little Hereditary Prince] and our royal personages—where life is pleasantly spent these days. The new arrangement continues, and dining in the small room is found wretchedly uncomfortable. . . . Thus is it, my Lotte, when people do not know the right time to put off old ways, or to begin new. And there is more to come."<sup>2</sup> Goethe declines to accompany the Duke

<sup>1</sup> See Goethe to Knebel, April 30, 1785.—Tr.

<sup>2</sup> Goethe to Charlotte von Stein, Sept. 8, 1785.—Tr.

on the considerable journey to Berlin. But he does go to Gotha (November 1785), because circumstances may require the presence of a third,<sup>1</sup> the business on hand being that of the *Fürstenbund*. All through, the *Fürstenbund* was disliked by Goethe, while the Duke, as one of the body of princes, and as a good son of the Fatherland, felt a genuine enthusiasm for it. In the beginning of the new year 1786, Karl August, to Goethe's annoyance, entered the Prussian service. In the beginning of May 1786 we find the two living once more "after forest fashion" at Ilmenau; but it is added, "pretty restrainedly."<sup>2</sup> However bitter Goethe's complaints might often be, he always in calmer mood was ready with full recognition of the splendid gifts and warm affectionateness of disposition of the Duke.

#### V. Goethe and Charlotte von Stein, 1782-1786.

But the life of his life remained ever the tender high union of soul with Charlotte. And yet, just when by becoming a member of the Chamber of Finance, he seemed to have drawn closer the chains which bound him to Weimar, came a disturbance of that union which agitated him dreadfully. Charlotte was very ill and depressed at the time (July 1782); something that Goethe said wounded her, she shut herself from him; her misinterpretation of a note from him made matters worse, she immediately forbade him to visit her for several days; but his reply, "that he has not deserved it, that he feels it, and is silent," opened her eyes to her injustice.<sup>3</sup> This discord indeed, soon was gone; but a heritage of pain throbbed long in Goethe, who was then by no means strong to bear it. At Charlotte's wish he had placed in his garden a stone seat, which he called after her (August 1782).

<sup>1</sup> Goethe wished, too, to see Tischbein's painting, *Conradin*.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> Goethe to Charlotte von Stein, May 5, 1786.—TR.

<sup>3</sup> See Goethe's letters to Charlotte von Stein, July 18-24, 1782.—TR.

When, in the beginning of October 1782, Goethe receives "an excellent letter" from his mother, he writes to his "only one :"—"So long as I have you both, there is nothing lacking to me." From this time on, the most cordial family life developed, and Goethe strove continually to render it more affectionate and intimate. He visits Charlotte twice in Kochberg during the autumn of 1782. At the fortnightly teas by which he released himself from further duties to society, she is the hostess. In the evenings he is with her regularly, and has nothing concealed from her, as he writes to Knebel.<sup>1</sup>

On November 7, 1782, he writes :—"Seven years it is to-day since I came ; would that to-day also might begin a new epoch of my life and being, whereby I might grow continually more acceptable to thee." But she, always a prey to gloomy foreboding, feared this eighth year. Still their union grew closer. On April 14, 1783, Goethe takes Fritz Stein with him to Ilmenau as Charlotte's "image." In May 1783 he proposes to take the boy to live with him entirely, and Stein assents. After Fritz had unpacked his belongings, he was taken (May 27) by Goethe to Jena ; "Fritz is very good, and will be a common source of joy to us," writes Goethe on June 1, after their return. Charlotte writes to her sister-in-law :<sup>2</sup>—"Goethe has taken Fritz to live with him, and in educating him shows such kindness and clear understanding of the matter, that one may well learn from him. He is one of the few who can comprehend education in Rousseau's deep interpretation of it ; and as Fritz by nature has a charming mental

<sup>1</sup> Goethe to Knebel, Nov. 21, 1782 : "Alle Woche gebe ich einen grossen Thee, wovon niemand ausgeschlossen ist, und entledge mich dadurch meiner Pflichten gegen die Societät aufs wohlfeilste. . . . Abends bin ich bei der Stein und habe nichts verborgenes vor ihr."—TR.

<sup>2</sup> Frau von Schardt. See p. 366.—TR.



symmetry, it is a delight to Goethe himself to deal with him." Goethe accustomed his pupil to the simplest diet, and furthered his education after the most loving and wise fashion. In September 1783 Fritz is brought on the journey to the Harz; on the 6th, before starting, Goethe writes :—"Now adieu, my dear Lotte, and thank you for your dear leave-taking, never to be forgotten. Here are three keys—of the chest, the press, and my writing-table; except a few business matters, all is yours." All his private letters were shown to her; in all her anxieties he shared with warm sympathy. He was indeed often mute and reserved even in her presence; she playfully named him *Il penseroso*; but she felt that it was the oppression and weariness of his load of business. Very sadly passed the days on which they were both unwell; but their evenings of companionship were the happier, when they lived entirely for each other in the exchange of confidences, or together enjoyed books on natural history and the history of the earth, or listened to Herder reading aloud from his *Ideen*. At the end of the year 1783 Fritz is set to write to Goethe's mother, with whom, in January 1784, Charlotte also opens a correspondence. In February 1784 Fritz, and Fritz's elder brother Ernst, are taken to that opening of the new shaft at Ilmenau, which was so weighty an event to Goethe.

His love for Charlotte now enters on a strange phase of passionate yearning; it is impossible to satisfy his craving for assurance, and tokens that her heart is his. Her disquiet at this increases his fervour. When he goes to Brunswick in August 1784 she begs him, as he has to converse in French at the Court, to write to her in French, hoping that the expression of his yearning would thus be moderated. His enthusiasm of passion finds outlet in *Die Geheimnisse*.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> On August 23, 1784, Goethe sent to Charlotte von Stein the fol-

Charlotte had now resolved to undertake herself the management of her estate. Goethe will not oppose ; he even confesses that the way in which she goes about it makes him love her afresh,<sup>1</sup> though he cannot help the remark that by burdening herself with the cross of domestic economics she is only sharing an evil without being able to remove it.<sup>2</sup> He now makes up his mind to adopt Fritz Stein, and sends to Frau Aja two miniatures of his pet, that she may have the boy always before her ; hitherto she had possessed only a silhouette likeness of him.

During 1785 Goethe's love grew calm again, without losing depth and force. Illness and anxieties, however, darkened their "heaven."<sup>3</sup> Charlotte had made up her mind to seek recovery in Karlsbad this time, and thither Goethe too purposed to resort, taking the Fichtelgebirge on his way. But soon disgust with his lot takes such a hold of him that he buries himself in his thought, and even love cannot open his heart. "We will ever remain together, love. As to that be without uneasiness," he writes on the 20th of April 1785 ;

lowing stanza of *Die Geheimnisse* ; it is one of the half-dozen which he omitted from the poem as published in his collected works :—

"Gewiss, ich wäre schon so ferne, ferne,  
So weit die Welt nur offen liegt, gegangen,  
Bezwängen mich nicht übermächt'ge Sterne,  
Die mein Geschick an Deines angehängen,  
Dass ich in Dir nun erst mich kennen lerne,  
Mein Dichten, Trachten, Hoffen und Verlangen  
Allein nach Dir und Deinem Wesen drängt  
Mein Leben nur an Deinem Leben hängt."—Tr.

<sup>1</sup> Goethe to Charlotte von Stein, June 28 and July 7, 1784.—Tr.

<sup>2</sup> Goethe to Karl August, October 28, 1784.—Tr.

<sup>3</sup> On January 11, 1785, Goethe writes :—"Every one seeks his heaven outwards ; how happy I am that I have mine so near !" —Tr.

but a few days later he hurries in despair to Jena.<sup>1</sup> In the early weeks of May lingering indisposition kept the lovers apart. At this time, too, Charlotte was grieved about her son Karl, who had contracted debts in Helmstedt, where he was studying, and had suddenly left Helmstedt and gone to Göttingen, in the middle of a Semester, without his parents' leave.

The July spent by the lovers in Karlsbad was composed of happy days. "The dear Stein was in general well when here, and every one wished her well," writes Goethe, shortly before his own departure, to the Duke. Towards the end of August 1785 Fritz Stein travelled to Frankfurt under the care of an Eisenach merchant, to visit Goethe's mother. On October 6, 1785, Goethe writes to Charlotte:—"Fritz is merrier than ever. He has in Frankfurt for the first time learned to know what Freedom is; and my mother is the first who has taught him the philosophy of a joyous life in detail. You will be astonished to see how he has improved in everything." And elsewhere Goethe is right jubilant over the good derived from the journey by Fritz. How paternal his feeling towards the boy was, witness his words to Jacobi:—"Do you know what? I will bring him up for your girl. She will not get a prettier nor better fellow."<sup>2</sup> When in the latter part of September the Princess Galitzin, commended by Jacobi, came to Weimar, accompanied by the freethinker Hemsterhuis, and by the strictly orthodox Vicar-General von Fürstenberg from Münster, Goethe found it quite possible to be frank and natural with her. Without any invasion of Charlotte's power, the poet was powerfully attracted by this charming and graceful woman, whom Hemsterhuis celebrated as "Diotima." In education she was a follower of Rousseau; in religion she was a Pietist. She was at this time separated from her husband.

<sup>1</sup> Where he found consolation in Knebel's friendship. See p. 443.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> Goethe to Jacobi, September 11, 1785.—TR.

She had already heard much from Jacobi of Goethe's relation to Frau von Stein, whom she visited in October.<sup>1</sup> In the evening the two women met at Goethe's house. "This noble soul has awakened and strengthened us to manifold good by her presence," writes Goethe to Jacobi (October 21, 1785); "and your friends have brought us sweet joys and hours." Later he wrote to the Princess, begging that a correspondence of friendship might be opened between them. He enclosed a letter from Charlotte; this letter he had himself drafted.<sup>2</sup> He wished to get a look into the inner life of this lady, who was so strangely composed of enthusiastic faith and fresh intellectual clearness. But she remained silent; she could look for no good to her soul, she thought, in such a connection, and probably she felt, too, that Charlotte had entire possession of Goethe's mind and heart.

Meanwhile, to the behaviour of Charlotte's son Karl, whom she could no longer trust, was added another great anxiety; her second son, Ernst, was laid up with a neglected wound in the knee. At Christmas it grew so bad that Charlotte could not leave him. Goethe felt painfully the constant separation from her; add to which that she was pressed by many cares, that he was frequently gloomy and ill, seldom revealing his inner self—indeed often quite mute. Once he begs Charlotte to be patient, and even though his mood often grow desperate, not to draw mistaken inferences.<sup>3</sup> His deep-rooted superstition that every important resolve fails if confided to others, pre-

<sup>1</sup> Frau von Stein was at Kochberg during September and the first ten days of October. It was after her return to Weimar that she received this visit.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> See Goethe to Frau von Stein, December 4, 1785.—TR.

<sup>3</sup> Goethe to Charlotte von Stein, February 18, 1786:—"Habe du nur mit mir Geduld und lass dich nicht irren wenn mir's manchmal fatal wird."—TR.

vented him from telling Charlotte of his intended flight to Italy; and this too gave him pain. Ernst Stein grew better, but Karl's behaviour continued to give his mother great anxiety. At her desire Goethe wrote to Karl in his father's name, urging economy, and demanding an exact account how and why he had incurred the debts. Frequent illness and Goethe's various absences from Weimar kept the lovers apart again for a long time. "Let me ever find thy love the same! there is so much else that will not go on right," he laments to her, writing from Ilmenau, May 5, 1786. He had set his hope on Karlsbad, where he hoped to enjoy some happy weeks in Charlotte's society.

**VI. Goethe and Old Friends, 1782-6.**—In the little band of friends who made life brighter for him, the first place since the autumn of 1783 had been occupied by Herder. Herder at the time specified was working on the early part of his *Ideen zu einer Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit*,<sup>1</sup> which so happily fell in with Goethe's speculations on nature. Herder recognises in Goethe one of the few who have heart and head in the right place, one who is in every step in life a man; while our poet knew how to estimate Herder's acuteness, profundity of soul, large intellectual grasp. Another friend to whom Goethe continued heartily attached was the dejectedly vacillating Knebel. He was away from Weimar for a considerable time. Of him Goethe was glad to make a confidant, and rejoiced in mutual encouragement and comforting. And amid all changes a friendly relation with the kindly, gifted Wieland stood firm: Wieland saw how Goethe suffered beneath the burthen which he had taken on him for the good of the land, and rendered the due tribute of esteem to the upright courtier and minister.

As to friends at a distance—Merck did not indeed come

<sup>1</sup> *Thoughts on a Philosophy of the History of Mankind.*—TR.



to Weimar during the period now under review, but Goethe had many points of union with him, and rejoiced in his occasional good luck the more heartily as manifold want of success had made Merck constantly more bitter and weary of life. With Schlosser too Goethe remains on good terms; even if he cannot encourage the Duke to bring Schlosser to Weimar, but gets the decision left to Fritsch, who declares against it. Nor did the connection with Kestner break off; though they wrote but seldom they felt how dear they were to each other. When Kestner in 1785 writes to Goethe a detailed account of a great loss of means, Goethe replies:—"Be assured of my heartfelt sympathy, for my manifold life in the world has made my old friends still dearer to me. I thank you for your circumstantial letter and for your sureness that I would feel with and for you."<sup>1</sup> A Dr. Riedel, who came to Weimar, introduced by Kestner, and who afterwards married Lotte's youngest sister, pleased Goethe so well as to be recommended by him to the Duke and Duchess as *Landkammerrath*, with the prospect of becoming tutor to the young Prince.<sup>2</sup>

His relations with the two friends who in old times had been the most ardently clasped to the heart—with Jacobi and Lavater—had been changing in ways the most opposite. In 1782 Jacobi—still so bitterly offended that he doubted whether Goethe had any heart, and would hear nothing of the good which Knebel had to tell of Goethe—had mentioned to Schlosser an old loan not yet repaid by Goethe.<sup>3</sup> The Schlossers coming home through Frankfurt had told Frau Aja of this; she told Goethe, and he asked her to settle the

<sup>1</sup> Goethe to Kestner, Dec. 4, 1785.—In this letter occurs that great word:—"Wenn der Mensch sich selbst bleibt, bleibt ihm viel."—TR.

<sup>2</sup> See Goethe to Kestner, June 16, and July 21, 1786.—TR.

<sup>3</sup> See p. 298.—TR.

matter, at the same time did not omit to write to Jacobi, October 2, 1782. He regrets the delay in repayment of the loan, acknowledges the kindness which had by this loan helped him out of a great perplexity, and yields heartfelt thanks for it and for all the goodness of his friend in time past. He also alludes to the circumstance which had wounded Jacobi:—"When we grow older and the world grows a narrower place, we think often with pain of the days when we jested friends away for pastime, and laughed in thoughtless insolence at the wounds we inflicted—which we could not feel ourselves, and which we took no trouble to heal." The tender-hearted, emotional Jacobi could not, for all his piqued vanity, resist the generosity of this confession—which indeed is anything but a softening down of the fault confessed. The friendship was soon renewed in all its intimacy, and was not disturbed later on by the difference of their views on Spinoza. Jacobi after the death of his wife, an event which called forth Goethe's deepest sympathy,<sup>2</sup> came with his sister Charlotte to Weimar to Goethe, and they found each other again completely (September 1784). With deep emotion Jacobi parted from the noble friend whose heart he had misjudged so long.

While the friendship with Jacobi was knit anew, the connection with Lavater was loosed. And precisely through a personal meeting their separation was as it were finally sealed. The agreement, desired by Goethe, to peace and mutual tolerance in religious matters was not established. On the contrary, Lavater declared that whoever hated his

<sup>1</sup> See letters of Goethe to Jacobi in the years 1785-6. See especially that of June 9, 1785. Goethe was reading Spinoza's *Ethics* with Charlotte von Stein in November 1784.—Tr.

<sup>2</sup> Goethe to Jacobi, March 3, 1784. Helene Elizabeth Jacobi had, it will be remembered, been a dear friend of Goethe's. See pp. 221 and 227.—Tr.

*Pontius Pilatus*<sup>1</sup>—a work which disgusted our poet as a “*Capuzinade*”—must hate himself. In the third part of this work, certainly, Goethe found thoroughly good things, and believed he saw that humanity was by degrees becoming revealed to Lavater. He sent greeting to Lavater by the Duke so late as October 1784. But when the friend once so dear was more and more carried away by zeal for illuminating and converting, when he excited society by his magnetic cures, and made a progress through Germany as a prophet and worker of miracles, Goethe’s bitterness deepened to see any one lead astray men’s common sense with such vagaries. At the moment when Goethe himself had gained insight into the depths of Nature creative and active in accordance with eternal laws, was this to be his experience—his friend once so human in sympathy, now quite fallen from his old self, imposing his fables on the world as the only salvation? Goethe would gladly have avoided the ecstatic prophet, the distortion of the genuine human image of Lavater, that visited Weimar in July 1786. But he was compelled by the unusual delay in the lying-in of the Duchess to linger away in Weimar the time which he had thought to spend delightfully in Karlsbad by Charlotte’s side, and thus to await the arrival of Lavater, who came about seven o’clock in the evening of July 18,—the very day on which a little Princess was born. The prophet came with the Prince of Dessau, who was still a reverential follower: he stopped with Goethe, who invited the Duke, Herder, Wieland, and Bode to meet him. Goethe was perfectly cold and reserved; not a single word of confidence passed between them.<sup>2</sup> Every one else was charmed with

<sup>1</sup> For Goethe’s feeling about this work see his letters to Charlotte von Stein, April 6, 1782, and July 9, 1784, and his letter to Lavater July 29, 1782.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> See Goethe to Frau von Stein, July 21, 1786 :—“Kein herzlich ver-

Lavater, especially Wieland and the Duchess Amalia, also Fritz, in whose album he wrote some verses. Lavater could not, as far as Goethe was concerned, have come at a less favourable moment; the poet was longing to get away to Karlsbad, and had, too, to keep concealed the resolve which filled him with restlessness—the resolve to go away to Italy. That Lavater should appear precisely at this moment he looked on as a work of the gods, who desired his complete separation from the prophet who denied the God in Nature in whom he believed. Already, two years earlier, he had said:—"Of unions which do not sound the depth of Nature there can be no solid result;" still to bring about a separation so complete though tacit as was this one, the actual presence of Lavater was necessary. It was a dreary last meeting, where Goethe broke off an intimate connection twelve years old with a stern coldness deeply painful to himself.

How much happier was the meeting with the two Counts Stolberg, who ventured, in May 1784—with indeed the charming accompaniment of their wives—to visit the Weimar Court, though Fritz Stolberg and Klopstock had so insulted the Duke and his friend Goethe eight years before. "It was a very pleasant reminder of old times, and a new confirming of old friendship," writes Goethe to Kestner (June 24, 1784). He was especially attracted by the wife of Fritz Stolberg, the little, "cheery, sympathetic personality," the Countess Agnes. Christian Stolberg pleased him better on this occasion than did Fritz; he would have been glad to live awhile

traulich Wort ist unter uns gewechselt worden, und ich bin Hass und Liebe auf ewig los. Er hat sich in den wenigen Stunden mit seinen Vollkommenheiten und Eigenheiten so vor mir gezeigt, und meine Seele war wie ein Glas rein Wasser. Ich habe auch unter seine Existenz einen grossen Strich gemacht, und weiss nun was mir *per saldo* von ihm übrig bleibe."—TR.

with Christian.<sup>1</sup> Goethe's correspondence with their sister Auguste (who in the previous year had given her hand to her brother-in-law, the noble Andreas Peter Bernstorff, then three years an ex-Minister) was broken off, and under the changed circumstances he could feel no desire to renew it. All feminine friendships had given room to the one great love for Charlotte von Stein; only his union with his mother, who, although he had been unable to visit her for six years,<sup>2</sup> was his pride and comfort, remained unimpaired.

<sup>1</sup> Goethe to Charlotte von Stein, Gotha, June 5, 1784.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> The following is interesting in this context: Goethe to Charlotte von Stein, Eisenach, June 11, 1784—"I am told Frankfurt is but thirty-one hours away, and I am yet unable to entertain the most fleeting thought of going thither. So hast thou drawn my nature to thee that not a nerve is left for my other heart obligations."—TR.



## CHAPTER V.

### THE YEARNING FOR ITALY.

ON each return of the memorable days of his life—among which he counted the 7th of November—Goethe used to consider in serious retrospect the time just past, used to form resolves for the time to come. When in his new house in November 1782 he had all letters and papers of the last ten years stitched together he grew hot at the sight. “But I will not desist, I will see these ten years lie before me as from a hill the long valley just traversed.”<sup>1</sup> Two years later he reviews the numerous and differing epochs in his way of thinking during his life at Weimar, seeks to make the past right explicable to himself, to obtain a clear notion of the present, and to imagine what he would do if he at that moment came to that place and that service.<sup>2</sup> With still more intensity he must have brooded over past and future when in November 1785 his tenth year in Weimar had drawn to its close. The feeling that by his excessive labours in the harsh Thuringian climate the early elasticity of spirit had fled, could not but impel him to deliberate seriously whether it were not now time to shake off the load of business, to recruit ere too late, and to yield to the instinct of his artist nature. True, he had to thank the Karlsbad springs for “an altogether new existence,”<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Goethe to Knebel, Nov. 21, 1782.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> Goethe to Karl August, Dec. 26, 1784.—TR.

<sup>3</sup> Goethe to Knebel, Dec. 30, 1785.—TR.

and he hoped much from a new visit in the coming summer ; but the narrow Weimar circle, with Weimar official business straining all his energies, had grown terribly oppressive ; he was in need of a new life for his refreshing. When he was in Leipzig at the end of 1782 he wrote to Charlotte (Dec. 28) : " I will stay here some days longer, and for thy sake as for my own ; I could at last bear it [the ennui of Weimar] no more ; there was no use trying. If I do not constantly get new ideas to work I become, as it were, ill." The short flights to Ilmenau, the Harz, Karlsbad, and other places, could not permanently satisfy ; the tension of all his life, and the weariness of some of it, had worn so many furrows in his soul that nothing but a bold excursion on new paths into an unexplored world could save him. And where could he hope to find what he desired if not in Italy ? Into Italy he had already twice looked down from the Gotthard Pass, thither before he had known Weimar he had planned to travel, he saw Italy by the magic mirror of his father's memories of it, Kayser's fresh letters had lately brought it near to him, Tischbein's *Conradin*<sup>1</sup> spoke to him with alluring persuasiveness of the land beyond the Alps, where it was painted. When, so early as April 1785, he thought for a moment of flying from Weimar, the visit to Italy must have been in his mind. Thenceforward the secret hope to find in Italy healing for body and spirit grew constantly stronger. In January 1786 occurs his bitter comparison of the rude German tongue with the melodious Italian.<sup>2</sup> He was then working at Italian with Fritz Stein.

As he grew surer of the necessity of flight, it behoved him

<sup>1</sup> Goethe to Charlotte von Stein, Ilmenau, Nov. 10, 1785 ; to Herder, Ilmenau, Nov. 11, 1785.—TR.

<sup>2</sup> Goethe to Charlotte von Stein, Gotha, January 26, 1786. He is talking about his " poor unfinished operetta," *Scherz, List und Rache*.—TR.

more and more to consider the external arrangements which should make flight possible. He felt sure that the Duke would allow him to be absent a considerable time without forfeiting his salary; but his salary would not suffice for the expenses of an enjoyable stay of the duration hoped for. He resolved to raise the needful sum by issuing an edition of his collected works; those writings which were still fragmentary he could get ready in Italy at his leisure. All that he had as yet done by way of preparation for such an issue was some slight alteration of *Werther*, and a transcription of *Iphigenie*. But now not only should everything already printed and the pieces given on the Weimar stage undergo fresh revision; what was yet incomplete should if possible be brought to a conclusion—*Egmont*, *Elpenor*, *Tasso*, *Faust*. Only *Wilhelm Meister* was excluded from the plan; to thoroughly remould the part already written and to develop the work further would demand time.

Early in June 1786 Goethe is at work revising; in the middle of the month he takes some of his work to Ilmenau with him. At the mines he sets many things in order, that he may go on his travels free from uneasiness. On June 16 he writes to Charlotte:—" *Der Triumph von Empfindsamkeit* is ready, all but the first act, which I have left to the last. . . . Now I am thinking of *Stella*, and will not rest until it also is to my mind. You shall see and judge all. To go through these things and renew them within makes me half merry, half sad. Only that I must I should not do it." When back in Weimar he took up *Werther* and *Iphigenie*, and very valuable was the aid received from Herder and Wieland. Charlotte, who transcribed his shorter poems, left Weimar for Karlsbad on July 2, 1786. Just after her departure Goethe came to a final arrangement with the Leipzig bookseller, Göschen. For the proposed eight volumes the poet was to have 2000

thalers, to be paid in instalments as each volume appeared. Göschel had the right to issue a special edition on Dutch paper. Goethe meant to complete the first four volumes before leaving Germany; thus he would have 1000 thalers to help him on to Easter 1787. He had arranged with Councillor of Commerce Paulsen of Jena, that in Rome and Venice sums of money should await the Leipzig merchant, Johann Philipp Möller; under this name he meant to travel.

But now ensued that delay in Weimar. The illness of Ernst Stein contributed to the worry of the time. (Karl Stein had found a place as *Kammerjunker* and *Auditor* in Mecklenburg. "Light by nature, he will come through life's difficulties lightly," writes Goethe to Charlotte on July 6, 1786.) At length on July 24 he gets away with Chancery Secretary Vogel, whom he had long employed in transcribing. A week later the Duke followed. Herder also with wife and son came to Karlsbad again. Goethe and Charlotte were together until August 14, when she left, Goethe accompanying her as far as Schneeberg, where he remained a day or two collecting mineralogical specimens. He now revised the latter part of *Werther*. Every evening he read aloud from his works. *Iphigenie*, which he had had written down in the external semblance of verse by Vogel, produced great effect.

He had hoped to leave for Italy on his birthday, August 28, 1786, but he soon saw that a few days more must be given up. On August 23 he writes to Charlotte:—"And then in the free wide world I shall live with thee, and in happy loneliness, without name, without rank, draw nearer to the old earth whence we are taken." Whither he was about to travel he kept secret from her, as in the winter of 1777 the journey to the Harz. His birthday was kept by his friends and acquaintances after the cheeriest fashion; he received several poems in the name of his own unfinished ones. Herder

once more commended *Iphigenie* to his attention ; instead of “hammering deaf stone” (he thought that Goethe was going on a mineralogical excursion), let him get “his tools to this labour.”<sup>1</sup> Immediately after this the Duke left Karlsbad ; his humour and cheeriness had made the time very pleasant for the company gathered there, though he had somewhat spoiled the good effect by rough jokes. Goethe was with him as far as Engelhaus : there a troop of maidens greeted him with merry farewell verses of his friend’s composing.<sup>2</sup> Only undecidedly did Goethe on this occasion speak of his purposed travel. But on September 2, 1786, the day before that on which he started, he wrote to the Duke, begging leave of absence for a considerable time, and declaring himself more precisely. “You are happy,” he said ; “you are going to an appointment [in the Prussian army] that you have desired and chosen. Your affairs at home are in good order and in good train ; and I know that you now permit me to think of myself—nay, you have often called on me to do so. In general business [the Treasury and the Council] I can certainly be done without at present ; and as for the special tasks with which I am charged, I have so ordered them that they can go on awhile without me ; even though I died, indeed, no hitch would occur. Many other fortunate concurrences of these stars I pass over, and beg you only for unconditional leave of absence. The use of the baths two years running has done much for my bodily health, and I hope the best for the elasticity of my spirit also, if, left to itself, it but may for a time enjoy the free world. The first four volumes are at length in order ; Herder has stood by me with untiring fidelity. For the last four I need leisure and a mind in tune. I have con-

<sup>1</sup> *Die Italiänische Reise*, September 8, 1786 (the close of the entry).—TR.

<sup>2</sup> The lines beginning “Ist es denn wahr, was man gesagt?”—TR.



sidered the matter too lightly, and only now do I see how much is to be done if we are to have no botching. All this and yet many other concurring circumstances impel me and compel me to wander and lose myself in regions of the earth where I am yet unknown. I travel by myself under a name that is not mine, and from this enterprise that seems so strange I hope for the best result. Only, I beg, let no one know that I am to stay away. All those who work with me and under me, or who in any other way have to do with me, expect me from week to week, and it is well that this should so remain, and that I being absent should influence as one always expected."

That it was the beautiful land of Art which drew him irresistibly he had to conceal from the Duke, in order to avoid betrayal. He writes in his *Diary*:<sup>1</sup>—"On this journey I shall, I hope, gain calm satisfaction of soul as to the fine arts, imprint their sacred image durably on the soul, and preserve it there for silent enjoyment in the future." Nay, he hoped now at length to ascertain whether he were designed to be a poet or a worker in plastic art. In order "to be healed of the physico-moral evils which plagued him in Germany, and at last made him useless,"<sup>2</sup> he would completely put off the Privy-Councillor, the Minister, the master, he would have no servant, would enjoy a careless student life, unfettered by etiquette, would become a simple human being again. But he felt indissolubly united with Weimar, with his gracious Prince and master, with his noble Princess, with Herder, Knebel, Wieland, with Charlotte and her Fritz, in whose society he hoped to spend a beautiful old age in communion of intellect

<sup>1</sup> This passage is preserved in Riemer's *Mittheilungen*. It is one of those which did not pass into the *Italiänische Reise* as published. See in Hempel's Goethe, Theil xxiv., S. 626, Düntzer's guess that it was written at München.—Tr.

<sup>2</sup> Goethe to Karl August, January 25, 1788.—Tr.

and heart. The relation with Charlotte, often painfully passionate, often troubled by many anxieties, had indeed contributed to the gloom which the happiness of a wife and home would have tended to lighten and disperse ; still his best consolation was his faith in the noble woman who on her part so fully recognised his worth ; and by a family life accordant with his position his circle of labours and studies would have been sadly contracted. The main causes of that oppressed state in which Italy seemed his sole refuge were—the burden of business, so ill accordant with his genius ; the narrowness of the intellectual horizon of Weimar ; and the rude Thürringian climate. And he hoped indeed that this journey would make Charlotte and himself much happier in their love ; he writes from Palermo, May 18, 1787 :—" Now that far distance and absence have, as it were, purified away all that stagnation which of late had come upon our intercourse, the fair flame of love, of truth, of remembrance, again blazes up and shines in my heart."

In his last letter to Charlotte before departure he explained himself as we have heard him in his letter to the Duke ; to Charlotte he left the use of his garden ; his pet Fritz remained in his house, expecting him to come back soon. The only person who knew his plan was his faithful Philipp Seidel, who was to rule in his house during his absence. No birthday congratulation to the Duke on this 3d of September ; his celebration of that day consisted in this, that on it, about three o'clock in the morning, without confiding his purpose to any one, he left Karlsbad. He drove alone in a postchaise, his sole luggage a portmanteau and a knapsack, in which were his unfinished writings, maps, guide-book, and a *Linnaeus*. Charlotte's ring was his talisman of travel.

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